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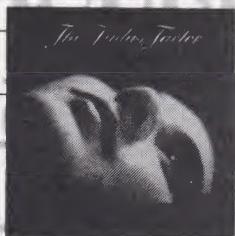
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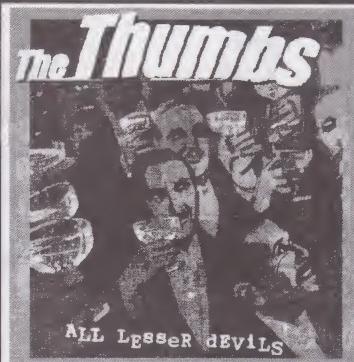
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Law of Inertia

Magazine

Issue #8: Fall 2000

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People With Cameras: Ross Siegel (all pics unless otherwise noted), Hal, Tim Baier, Michael Iglar, Angie F. Lopez, Chris Burque, Dave Mandel, Shawn Scallen, Jacob Futerwick, Kathy, Ana Saldamando

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#6 W/ Saves the Day, Braid, Good Clean Fun, Time in Malta, The Grey AM, American Steel, AFI, Planes Mistaken for Stars, The Alkaline Trio.

#7 Women in Punk Issue W/ Indecision, The Muffs, Le Tigre, Discount, Rocket-fuel, Hit it or Quit it, Jejune, Co-Ed, Fiddler Empire, Susan Wills, Idle Hands, Apples in Stereo, Blue Ghost PR.

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Review Policy: The Law of Inertia review staff will consider all records (CD format is preferred), zines, movies, books, and websites for review. Due to the gazillions of submissions we receive-- and the intention of not overloading each issue with reviews-- we cannot promise anything will be reviewed. Moreover, if we feel that the submission fits our format then there's a damn good chance that it will receive our critiques... eventually. Note, please please please do not e-mail us to ask if your submission will be reviewed. That's really annoying, and writing a review while annoyed is never in your best interest.

Law of Inertia Offers a Hearty Glass of Powerade to: Ross' family, all the writers, all the bands, the love and support of Amy Fidler, Jonah Bayer (and his mean father), Adam and Billy of the 65 Film Show, Tim Holden, Pat and the Grey AM, Bobbo, Jimi Cheetah, Megan Callow, 710 East State, Ana Saldamando, Nick Powers, Gabe Handjob, Vanessa @ Fat Wreck, Chris @ Big Top, Maria @ Blue Ghost, Michael Blair @ Bullet Designs, Dean Prospicio, Storm @ CD Forge, Sasha, Marcia Miller, Hillary Williams (thanks for the great drawing), Matt Owens @ Volume One, Sam Taylor, Scott and Angels in the Architecture, that gorgeous girl in Austin, TX who bought me a drink then proceeded to destroy me in a game of pool.

The opinions expressed in this issue of LOI do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors.

I'm sitting in a campground in Memphis, Tennessee directly across from Graceland. Pretty cool, huh? I can actually see Elvis' private jet on display at the infamous estate from where I sit typing this intro. You see, I'm on a roadtrip accompanied by three of my best friends. We decided that after we graduated from college, which was about two months ago today, we would travel the nation we had studied and read about in book after book in class after class. It's a pretty cool country, I must say. Memphis leaves a lot to be desired, but America as a whole has a lot to offer. Okay, I could do without the endless supply of strip-malls and the ubiquitous fast-food chains that line our nation's highways. But, I've seen a lot of sites-- both natural and manufactured-- that I think make America a unique, if not a great place. Where else can one see the National Civil Rights Museum, a Rock and Soul Museum, the king of rock and roll's home, eat pork-shoulder sandwiches, and then go hear some of the best zydeco music in the world all in one day? It almost makes me proud to be an American.

Anyway, since you last heard from me I have decided on yet another field of study and I am heading to graduate school in New York City for the next few years. This issue is virtually ready to begin being edited and I am ecstatic. Read any edition of any zine and some self-righteous editor will tell you "this issue has been the most hectic one yet," or something along those lines. But really, this issue has been crazy. Among other things, Dan Frantic, your beloved co-editor of LOI, and I agreed that if we are to stay as good friends as we have been for the past 5 and a half years then we probably shouldn't work together in a professional setting. That means that this will most likely be the last issue of LOI that Dan Frantic appears in. Hopefully we can continue without him... he will be missed. But, since LOI would be nothing if not for our under-paid, over-educated staff I have decided to promote a young man whose work on LOI has been unmatched these past few issues (as a matter of fact, I have trouble matching his work myself.) Allow me to introduce to you Jonah Bayer, Law of Inertia's new Associate Editor. You may know him from his scathing record reviews. Hopefully you will learn to love him as we have-- but you probably will not because he's such an asshole. Kidding.

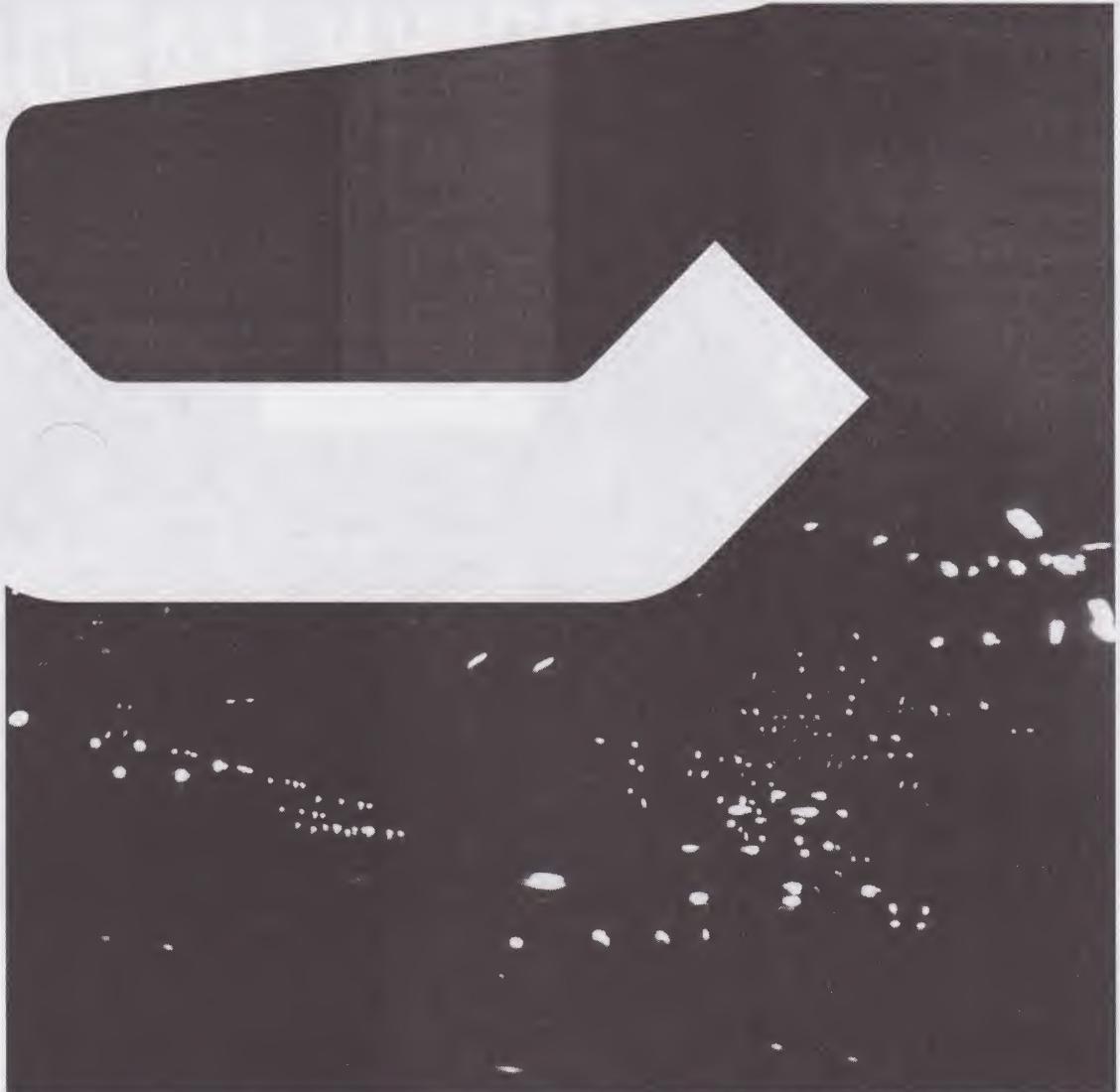
The second reason this issue has been stressful relates back to my introductory remarks from our last issue. You may remember my rant about making enemies through this zine and how that went against the whole reason I started this publication in the first place. At that time I had two enemies I was sure of. People who I didn't want to work with and who felt the same way about me. On the positive side, one of those enemies is no longer an enemy. That particular record label and I patched things up and buried the hatchet. On the flipside, I have made about 10 new enemies to replace the repaired one.

I'm not going to whine to you again about how much it sucks to think someone hates me and my friends who work on this zine because we don't like their records or said something they didn't appreciate. I'm not in this for those people, I'm doing this for those who love LOI and more importantly I'm doing this for me. Nonetheless, it's pretty demoralizing when people go out of their way to e-mail me and let me know just how much they think my magazine and I suck. Don't you kids have anything better to do with your time? Get a fucking hobby. Start your own fanzine!

Needless to say, the thought of throwing in the towel and completely ending LOI Magazine occurred to me quite often during this issue's production. On the one hand, I felt that LOI wasn't nearly compensating me enough for the time and energy I put into it. Of course, I'm not doing this to get rich-- 'cause that's totally a pipe-dream in the first place-- but it would be nice to have some money at the end of the day. On the other hand, I considered whether or not the job of a publisher is worth the 2 or 3 issues I lovingly put out each year. Specifically, that job is to suck up to anyone and everyone. I refuse to work with people that treat me like a commodity and that is exactly what seems to be happening. To make a long story short, I have decided to keep doing LOI even with my new grad school program.

With that said, I'm very excited about this issue. I think it is one of the better issues we've released, hopefully you will agree. Issue 7 garnered lots of attention and brought us a lot of new readers, some of whom even wrote in to tell us what they thought. Please do this. Tell us what bands you'd like to see in our pages, tell us if you have something to contribute, tell us if you are looking for a few handsome, single, college-grads for long walks on the beach and more. So, check this bad-boy out. I hope you like it.

Don't step on my blue suede shoes,
Ross Siegel



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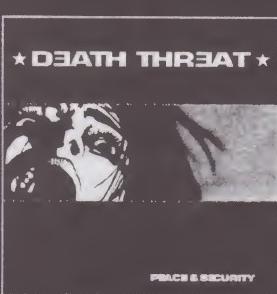
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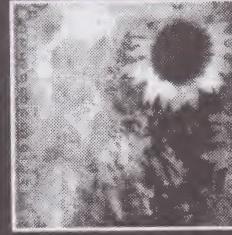
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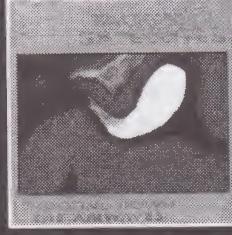
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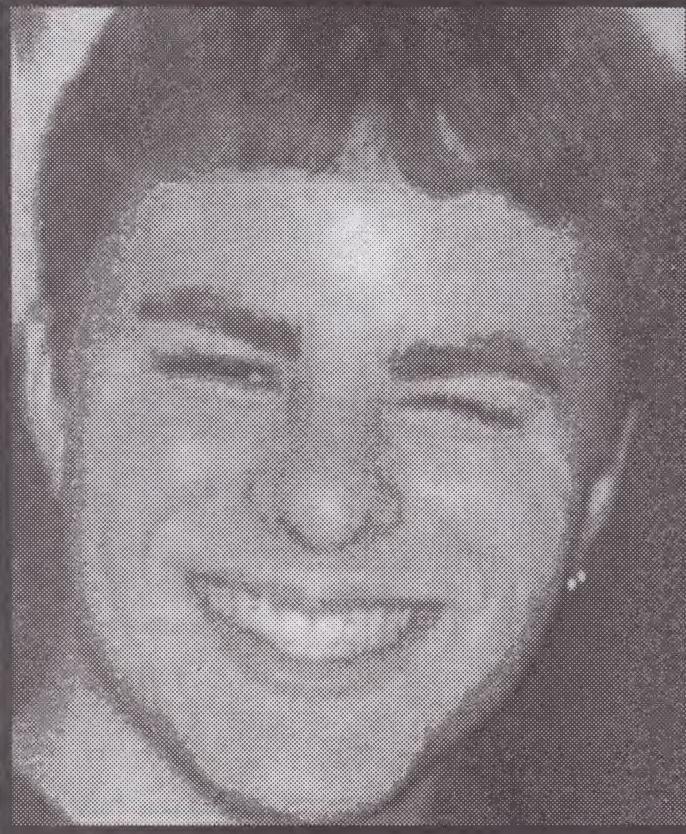
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I threw a party tonight. You know, me and my housemates got a few kegs of beer (and some Sprite for those of us that don't drink), cleaned our house top to bottom, and invited over 300 of our closest friends here in Ithaca for some fun. It was going really well for the first two hours: almost everyone I wanted to show up did, no one was throwing plates into the street like at our last party, and this girl who I thought was the cutest thing since Paul Newman seemed to really dig me. Then the cops came. Yup, those neo-fascist instruments central to any self-respecting totalitarian state came in droves and set to work yelling at me and my friends. It didn't help that a few wise-guys and girls were throwing plastic cups at the cop cars as they drove up, but I didn't deserve to be screamed at, threatened, embarrassed, and frightened. I think I was the only one at the party who was more than willing to cooperate. The cop told me to have everyone on our lawn and in our house gone in two minutes or he would "drag me and my cohorts down to the station and process us," or something like that. So, I set to screaming my head off at all the beady-eyed twenty-somethings staring at me. At the same time a good friend of mine was humiliated for being the only minor unfortunate enough to get caught

with alcohol in her hand. Because no one really knew what to do, for about a minute everyone just stared as I yelled, "I'm totally serious, get the fuck out of here! Leave!" Finally they got the idea when the cop dragged one of the aforementioned wise-guys and my unfortunate friend into squad cars.

It's safe to say that I made a big fool of myself in response to the cop's orders. I ran around waving my arms like a chicken telling all my friends to get the fuck out of there. I panicked and I freaked out, but the thought of going to jail that night didn't really appeal to me. I mean, all I wanted out of the party was a good-night kiss from the cute girl that I was talking to, and look what I got: a chance to kick 300 of my nearest and dearest off the property. Not quite the ideal evening I was hoping for.

After the chief cop, who turned out to be sort of cool in the end, left without arresting me and my housemates, I was forced to consider why I'm always so eager to throw parties with my friends. Why do I go out of my way to buy a hundred dollars worth of beer (a beverage I can't even drink without wretching), invite over friends who only want beer, keep my friends under control in hopes of avoiding arrest, then clean up the filthy house with my hung-over housemates the next day, and do it two or three times a semester? Do I do it because it's sort of an expected thing in college? You know, "I'll have a party tonight and buy all the beer for everyone if you do the same thing tomorrow." Or, do I throw them because I love the self-gratification and self-satisfaction that comes with having 300 people show up to my house for a night of revelry and conversation about what to do after graduation? If the latter is the answer, do I really need kids coming to my house, sitting on my chairs, and hanging out on my porch to feel like I have lots of friends and that I am secure with my social situation? God, I hope not, but sometimes I think that kind of positive-reinforcement can be a necessity.

It's sort of like a birthday that everyone remembers. If no one remembers that your birthday is, say, October 31st, and when that day comes everyone acts like it's merely Halloween, you sort of feel like a loser. However, if on your birthday every other person on the street shouts, "Hey Ross, happy fucking birthday! Can I take you out tonight to celebrate?" you feel great. That's how I feel about the parties I throw. When I go out of my way to entertain I want everyone to have a good time so that in some small place in the back of my head I can feel that they're all having a good time because of me...

and they all came because of me. Similarly, that's how I feel at other people's parties. When I go to a friend's house that happens to be throwing a shin-dig on any given Saturday I sort of feel that I am contributing to everyone's good time. In other words, if I weren't at the party, it would end just a bit sooner (although the reality is that at the parties I go to the people leave when the beer runs out).

It's sad to say, but I'm slowly figuring out that the reality of the party situation is that people go where the beer is on a Saturday night, not where the people who care about them are going to be. (Most) people do not come to my house for a party because they hear that this great guy named Ross lives there. Hell, I didn't even know a good deal of people at the party in question. I would love to believe that all my good friends come to support me in my quest for self-security, but a bunch of people I wanted to be there didn't even show up. This leads me to believe that on a campus with 50 or so parties going on each night people basically pick the function of choice for quite superficial reasons, like where the cutest boys or girls are, where the best beer is being served, which house is closest, and not necessarily where their dearfriends are going to be or even where they might have the most fun. It sucks but that's the way it is and who am I to complain? Right?

Believe it or not I never really worried about this type of stuff in high school. Between ages 15 to 18 I think I went to maybe 3 or 4 parties. Instead, on a Friday night me and my disaffected youth friends would go to punk rock shows, movies, bowling, etc. Pretty much anything that didn't involve social status and pretense. When I got to college, I felt that I fit in to a general community of people for the first time in my life-- as opposed to a group of angst ridden teenagers. I found that I could go to parties and not feel like I was the big loser who everyone wondered why he was there. I could go and be myself and have a whole lot of fun. And, I didn't even need to drink to do so!

As time went on I got kind of sick of the whole party thing. Perhaps I didn't like the idea of a whole campus of kids who waited all week to drink themselves silly in order to burn off stress built up from school work. Maybe it was that I was sick of going to the same houses and seeing the same people drink the same cheap beer and talk about the same things. I know that sounds a bit harsh since

I've made some great friends in my college career and I've had a lot of fun over the past four years as well. I just got really sick doing the same thing weekend after weekend. My friends and I would joke that in our last semester of senior year, which will be over by the time anyone reads this, we would partake in activities that we hadn't tackled yet. We would spice things up and make our last college semester one to remember. I'm not quite sure if that meant road trips to New York City or simply finding other stuff to do on a Saturday night other than going to parties. To my dismay nothing happened. We just followed the routine we had set 4 years prior and didn't have any wild or crazy experiences to speak of.

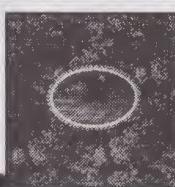
This brings us back to the events that transpired tonight. I told a dear friend of mine at the party that I never have a good time at my parties as I'm always the only sober one there and I get stressed out because of that. I feel as though I'm supposed to be some sort of watchdog while all my friends are fulfilling all sorts of hedonistic desires. So you see, I'm not quite sure why I bother having parties. What I've discovered in the past year or so is that the things I did for fun in high school are equally fun for me now. I would be so much happier going to punk rock shows, movies, dance clubs, or bowling instead of parties. But, it's strange: when I was in high school I always wanted to go to parties but didn't feel like I fit in enough to have fun at them. Plus, I didn't think that I had anything in common with the kids that did all the partying back then. So here I am, four years later, and I am secure enough to know that I can go to a party and have a good time... I just don't want to. All I want to do is be with my best friends and have good, clean, fun (to allude to a good band name).

I don't want to party, and I don't want to do the same things over and over. Well, scratch that. What I mean is that I don't want to try to be somebody I'm not. I'm facing facts, and the facts are that I am not a partier and I am not the social butterfly many people believe me to be. Instead, I am someone who is quite content to rent a movie on a Saturday night and watch it after cooking dinner. Sure I'd love to have someone to do that with, but I think most of my friends are more concerned with going where others are going. I don't mean to say that I'm more secure than everyone else, because I think saying that would be arrogant and false. Instead, I simply think I know what I want before everyone else does. What I want, to put it bluntly, is to have fun on my own terms while still keeping my life interesting. And if that means I go to a party only once a month, then so be it.

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Cursive

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'Cursive's Domestica' is the politics of love and hate. It's the vicious assault, the tender embrace, and the bitter waiting game that falls in between. These are the stories of anger, heartbreak, deceit and disappointment that keep us desperate. With the addition of Ted Stevens (singer/songwriter of Lullaby for the Working Class) on guitar and vocals, and backed by one of the tightest rhythm sections in indie-rock, Cursive's anthemic explosions and technical tricks are 'so dizzyingly intense that it's hard to make it through the whole album without taking a break to wipe the sweat from your brow or the tears from your eyes. It's exhausting, but extremely cathartic'. (CM - JE)

Cursive has written the soundtrack to the most troubling, intimate moments of our lives. This is 'Cursive's Domestica', their third feature full length, and quite obviously their most triumphant.

The Faint



Blank-Wave Arcade CD/LP (lbj-28)

The music, stark and uncompromising, is filled with electronic surges, darkwave brushstrokes, confessions and come-ons.

The Faint combine rock instruments (guitar, bass) with "now" electronic elements (synths, drum machines) to create melodic, melancholic post-modern music-- but not without hope. Their music is haunting, yet danceable--an aesthete's memory of tainted pop music.

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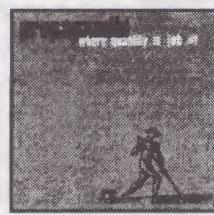
Randy - You Can't Keep
A Good Band Down CD

Hell, we're certainly not going to argue with that. If Propagandhi and Ted Nugent went bow-hunting with Queen and Subcomandante Marcos, you'd get **Randy**. This is the best collection of anarcho-punk-rock anthems there is right now. Truly amazing.



The (International) Noise
Conspiracy - The First
Conspiracy CD

Insane retro-situationist garage-punk mayhem from the dude who fronted Refused on "The Shape of Punk to Come"! Nation of Ulysses meets The Make-Up and The Who at the student revolts of '68! Essential. Absolutely goddamn essential.



Propagandhi - Where Quantity
Is Job #1 CD

Due to an absolutely bewildering and thoroughly irrational popular demand, it's the CD release of Propagandhi's rarest, most-out-of-print, liveliest, most demo-stuff plus the re-release of Propagandhi's half of the now infamous and deleted Propagandhi/I Spy split 10 inch. 28 tracks and 72 minutes of history ranging from the sacred to the profane.

... But Alive - Bis Jetz Alles
Ging Gut CD

When it comes to punk-rock, "eclectic" is usually a code-word for "crap", but these 4 German anti-fascists pull it all off without one iota of lameness. 16 full-throttle revolutionary punk rock anthems with some ass-shakin' ska and reggae influences thrown in for good measure



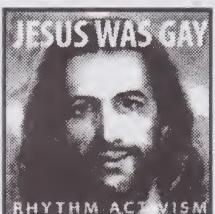
I Spy - Perversity Is Spreading

... It's About Time! CD
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Rhythm Activism - Jesus Was
Gay CD

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Out Now: Noam Chomsky - Case Studies In Hypocrisy: U.S. Human Rights Policy double CD. Coming soon: Weakerthans - *Left and Leaving*, the long-awaited new Propagandhi, new Howard Zinn double CD spoken word, and more ...

Pins and Needles

DaN FrANTic

This is such a goddamn good idea that I can't believe nobody has ever thought of it before. J.D. Salinger, that infamous recluse, is going to make me and my friends famous, whether he likes it or not. Because we're going to interview him - the first people to interview him in, like, forever - come hell or high water. And do you know how? We're going to hold a hunger strike, we're going to lock ourselves up in a room without any food, without anything except a telephone and an internet connection and some books and maybe a Che Guevara poster, and we're going to tell the New York Times and the Washington Post and CNBC and everyone else that we, a heretofore unknown group of daring and bohemian young artistes in possession of near-Warholian levels of gusto and ingenuity, dare Mr. Salinger, that icon of disaffected youth, to stand and watch idly as we slowly waste away, wanting only a momentary glimpse of the genius he so selfishly keeps to himself.

And then when he gives in - which he will, if the guy has even half a heart - we'll ride it all the way to the top, fame and fortune and everything, and maybe we won't even print the stupid interview at all, but instead we'll sell it to *Time* for a billion dollars, and we'll be so damn rich, every single one of us, that we'll never have to go to stupid college again. In one brilliant maneuver we will have enabled ourselves to bypass the tedious educational system altogether. Take that, Wesleyan!

All of which sounds very good when it's three in the morning in Connecticut and you're all bored as hell, loafing around on tattered couches picking at congealed slices of the pizza you ordered four hours ago when, in a sudden stroke of unprecedented

genius, you decided to play ball with the big boys and start up your very own internet magazine. An idea, I might add, whose entire life span ends up being about five hours long.

I was going to write a movie script, too, earlier this year. It was going to be a profoundly moving meditation upon the meaning of love, or something like that. First it got downgraded to a stage play, and then, like so many of my ideas, it disappeared entirely. I was also going to decorate my room, really decorate it, make it the punk rock bachelor pad I'd always wanted, so stunningly adorned that it would completely blow all preexisting aesthetic standards out of the water entirely.

A year ago, if I had come up with any of these ideas, I probably would have acted on them immediately, and chances are I'd be busy writing my next opus for the Coen brothers right now rather than plugging away at a computer that has nothing better to do than crash every five minutes. But this year the infamous sophomore slump has set in, and in a big way. There's a reason why most ubiquitous used-record-store finds, like Arrested Development's "Zigalalmundi" or whatever, are second efforts. It's a whole lot easier to come up with a big hit the first time around, and not just in music but in all other creative pursuits as well. Johnny sums it up best in *Trainspotting*: First you've got it, then you've lost it. If it happened to Lou Reed it can happen to you.

For the entirety of my freshman year at college, I was fully convinced that I'd be able to sidestep the sophomore slump entirely. After all, my unintentionally heroin-chic figure, although it may balloon twenty years down the road, is proof that the so-called "freshman fifteen" is nothing but a mildly clever alliteration. My freshman year, though not without its faults, was so exciting and iconoclastic on a personal level that I could envision nothing but blue skies from then on. I mean, shit, I was president of my class. I, who had virtually been on the bottom of the high school totem pole.

But for those of you who don't know, my school is in the middle of nowhere. More specifically, it's in Middletown, Connecticut, so named because it is equidistant from Boston and New York, and too distant from both to have absorbed even a fraction of whatever urban charm or sophistication they may

possess. With no affront meant to the good people of Connecticut (seriously), Middletown is a shithole. It's home to a mental hospital, a jail for juvenile delinquents, and the most plague-ridden trash dump-cum-thrift store I've ever seen. It is located, as I've come to understand, directly above a fault line and less than ten miles away from a nuclear power plant. It exists in a state of perpetual depression, a town lacking both the archetypal "quaintness" of New England and the friendly demeanor normally associated with small towns. Plus they hate college students with fervor, and I can't say I blame them. I'd hate us too, considering the gross socioeconomic disparity that exists between the students (myself included) and Middletown's primarily working-class population.

While Middletown may not be an utter cesspool, it's not exactly an idyllic paradise either, and once the splendor and newness of my freshman year (I'm at college! I can party all night and debate Nietzsche with cute girls and not do my laundry for weeks if I don't want!) wore off, the grimness of my surroundings began to set in. A few weeks into sophomore year, I began to realize that my shiny new friends weren't as shiny and new as they had once been and my classes were getting just a little bit tedious. Most of all, I started to sorely miss the bright lights of the big city. Though I never would have expected it of myself, I began to yearn for the sticky seats of San Francisco's MUNI buses or the insane homeless people who set up perch outside my record store all summer long. And I started to wonder whether the academic life was really the life for me—whether it was worth it for me to forsake both sleep and sociability in order to finish an obscure text on Russian literary theory. My extracurricular commitments, pleasurable as they

DANIC

may have been, started to feel like just that: commitments. Something done out of a sense of duty or obligation, if not to other people then to myself, so that I wouldn't start feeling like I was completely wasting my life.

Regular readers of my column probably know that, surprise surprise, I'm a pretty thin-skinned person. And though it may be mitigated by the fact that sometimes my martyrdom is genuine, I loooooooove to play the victim. It's just part of my personality, and not necessarily something I'm proud of. In any case, midway through my sophomore year I had adopted the victim role wholeheartedly, and I got so mired in a sticky mess of fatigue and self pity that every aspect of my life began to deteriorate. My grades, while salvageable, were falling well beneath my potential. My friends at school— and I love 'em dearly— didn't want to hang around with me if I was going to be Mr. Doom And Gloom all the time. And my passion for Wesleyan, and for college in general, was rapidly waning.

I embraced it, though. I took some perverse pleasure in coming up with brilliant schemes like interviewing J.D. Salinger with the expectation that I would never fulfill them. Like the narrator of Dostoevsky's "Notes from Underground," I wanted to test myself—to see just how goddamn low I could sink. For a brief period, I barely went out at all; I just stayed in all day like an angsty teenager, playing Nick Drake on the stereo and staring at the ceiling. Self pity can be a dangerous drug.

This all gave me ample time to think, of course, and in particular it allowed me to ruminate upon the cyclical and self-defeating nature of depression. As someone who has battled against chronic depression for years, I'm well aware that it can easily spiral out of control— self-pity, even if it is intentionally initiated, is apt to take on a life of its own. It can't just be reined in at will. It all comes back to the concept of inertia I've discussed so many times before, and it applies not only to one's emotional state but also to society as a whole. We, as a loosely-defined community of punk rockers (or whatever you want to call it) sharing a similar core of ideals, are frequently more inclined to feel sorry for ourselves, to complain how the corporate suits and the political leaders just don't get it, than to actually do something about it.

So, I, for one, am going to do something about it. Seriously. I'm going to go to another school—in Scotland— where I'll enjoy myself more. I'm going to write a move script, tomorrow. Fuck it, I'm going to make a whole damn movie by myself. I'll make it a documentary, I'll follow my friends around and capture their lives and my own on film so the whole entire world can see how young and crazy and ambitious and inspired and tragically charmed we all are. And you know what else? If I have to skip breakfast tomorrow I will, because I am going to interview J.D. Salinger.



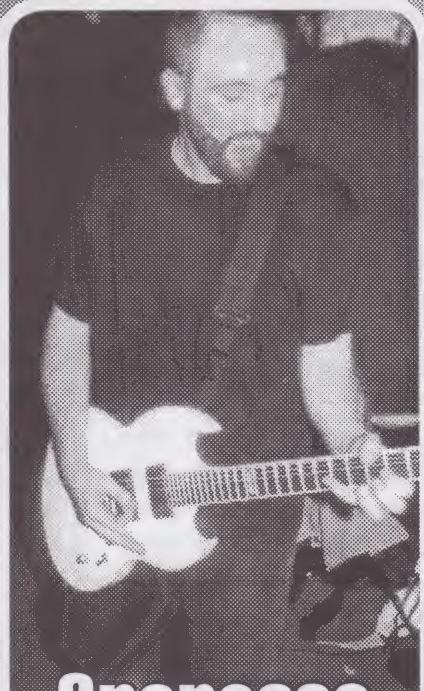
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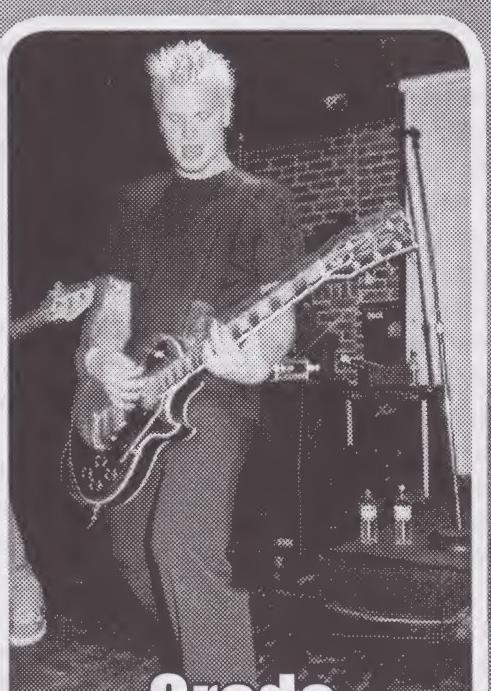
The Grey AM



The Damn Personals



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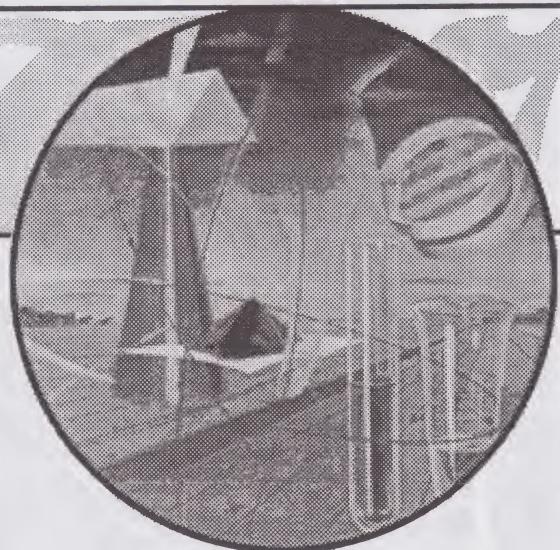
Greetings fellow rockers! Hope you're having fun talking smack about all your favorite bands and punk rock scenesters, I mean isn't that what it's all about? So, just in case you've been lost in a haze of dope smoke and hay fever, Gainesville's best attempt to bring back pop-punk, **Discount**, have broken up. That's right, then again their last album was no "Half Fiction" now, was it?... Thee members of the late great **Braid** have formed a new band called **Hey Mercedes**. They have an ep out on **Polyvinyl** any day now. No word on what they sound like, but expect the usual greatness from Bob Nanna and Co. if you missed Braid the first time around, here's your chance to check out the next edition.... The long awaited follow-up to Propagandhi's phenomenal "Less Talk, More Rock" will be out November 7th. That piece of work will be called "Today's Empires, Tomorrow's Ashes." I guarantee it will be amazing.... Everyone's favorite punk super-label, **Vagrant Records**, recently signed **Saves the Day**, **Rocket From the Crypt**, and the **Alkaline Trio**. And I thought the **Gotohells** were their only real super-group.... I don't think I'm supposed to print this, but rumor has it that **A New Found Glory** recently signed to MCA. The next Blink 182 from Florida?.... According to our sources **Liberation Records** is shutting its doors for good.... **The Grey AM** have left **Law of Inertia Records** and have signed to **Drive Thru**. Yes, everyone wants a piece of us and all those we work with.... **Warner Bros. Records** recently dropped **Sensefield** from its roster after a disappointing new record. For a review of the unreleased album, check out our 6th issue.... By the time this issue hits news stands a Syracuse band called **Spark Lites the Friction** will have a new ep out on **Hanging like a Hex Records**. I really recommend you check out this band, they even feature an ex-member of **One King Down**, out. They fucking rock!... The rumors are true: **Death by Stereo** has left **Indecision** and has signed to **Epitaph**.... **Atom and His Package** will have a new EP on **Troubleman Unltd.** covering some songs by a group called the **Mountain Goats**. I recently heard the songs, and in typical Atom fashion, they rock.... **Desoto** have signed a band called the **Eternals**, formerly on **Thrill Jockey**. They're supposed to be dub-oriented rock, so check 'em out.... Some kid at a **Time in Malta** show told me that **Indecision** had broken up. I also heard Artie, **Indecision's** singer, was arrested at Krazy Fest for shoplifting a bottle of Gatorade. Classy.... Um, the **Dismemberment Plan** recently opened for Pearl Jam in Europe. I like the Dis Plan too, but I would love to see the crowd's reaction to their artsy... er... version of "Alive".... For all of you living on the east coast who don't keep up with west coast hardcore, Seth Brown, from the great **Status Magazine/Records** is now playing in **Countervail**.... Can anyone confirm that **Epitaph** signed trip-hop god, **Tricky**?... **MIA Records**, an NYC label that recently brought you records from **Candiria** and **Indecision** is out of business. So, don't send your demos there.... **Buddyhead**, a self-proclaimed "sell-out" company most well known for their e-zine, has now taken to the record label game. For their next (first?) release they will be releasing **Ink and Dagger's** next album.... **Lookout!** just signed everyone's favorite riot grrl act that covers Misfits songs, **Bratmobile**. I guess it was just a matter of time, though, since their drummer runs the label.... In the last issue I told you all the **At the Drive-in** had signed to a label called **DEN**. Well, I just received word that **DEN** has closed down and all the label's bands, including **ATDI**, have moved to **Grand Royal**. Hmmm, Bis and **At the Drive-in** on the same label? We'll have to see about that one.... I just heard that **Frodo** has broken up and apparently Shelby is starting a new band. Does anyone know anything about this?... The major label days are over for **Less than Jake**. The ska-core outfit has left Capitol and has joined the **Fat Wreck** camp.... Speaking of a youth crew revival, **In My Eyes** have broken up. The sad part is that they were one of the only neo-youth crew bands I liked. Oh well, **Revelation** can always sue **Jade Tree** over the **Explosion** to get the cash deficit left by **In My Eyes'** untimely break up.... Lifter Puller has broken up. A press release from the band stated that after their interview in **Law of Inertia**, the outfit felt they had nothing left to accomplish.

--Rosstafarian

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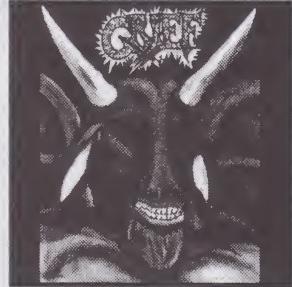
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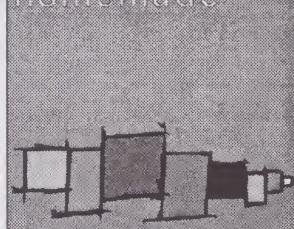
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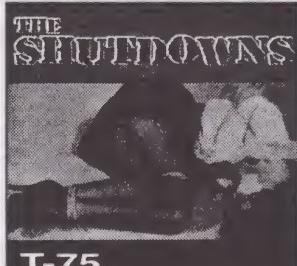
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Label Pages

Desoto Records

Web Page: www.desotorecords.com

Comments: Some of you may know Desoto as the label run by Kim Coletta, whom we interviewed in the last issue. Others may know it as the label that brought Burning Airlines, Shiner, The Dismemberment Plan, and Compound Red to mass appeal. This site is pretty simple but relatively fun and stunning as well. Unfortunately they really don't have band pages that give juicy gossip on who's up to what, or even where the bands are from. They do, however, have a bit of info on every single Desoto releases with some MP3s. A few great things that make this site worth while are "Bill's Rant" (where surfers get a chance to pick the brain of the famous Bill Barbot), the Desoto Pets page, and the fact that the label does a great job of helping their friends sell stuff that wasn't necessarily released on Desoto.

Key Selling Point: Possibly the most consistent label in Washington DC.

Best Releases to Date: Anything by Jawbox, Shiner, Compound Red, or The Dis Plan!

Miscellaneous

Sissy Fight

Web Page: www.sissystyle.com

Comments: One of my housemates turned me on to this game. You wouldn't think a house full of collegiate boys would stay up late into the night playing a game in which computerized school girls battle it out in the school yard, but then again maybe you would. The game in a nutshell is basically 5 girls, who represent players all over cyberspace, get together and fight it out to see who rules the school. Fighting can entail everything from scratching to teasing to tattling, while defensive maneuvers may consist of "cowering" or "licking your lollie." The game is played until only one girl hasn't been scratched or teased to death. It's basically the most creative and fun

strategy game I've played. Warning: Sissy Fight is quite addictive, play with caution!

Crazy Grandpa

Web Page: <http://www.crazygrandpa.com>

Comments: This is the most unpolitically correct website I've ever seen. Totally tasteless. And, coming from a guy who thought the movie "There's Something About Mary" was quite offensive (read: I'm a relatively PC person), I have to admit this website had me laughing my ass off. A girl named Becky thinks her grandpa is psycho, and from where I'm sitting, he is. The best parts about this site are the pictures ('cause Grandpa is a typical geriatric and Becky is pretty cute) and the hate mail: she and I should compare stupid correspondence. Although, Becky may be guilty of a hearty helping of bad taste, and poor judgement (when it comes to some Nazi thing she said that, from what I gather, wasn't as articulately stated as she thought), this site is great and I totally recommend it.

Find Your WuName

Web Page: <http://www.recordstore.com/wuname>

Comments: Some may find this stupid, especially if you haven't wondered at some point in your life where the hell the members of the Wu-Tang Clan got their names. So, type in your first and last name on this site and your Wu Name is thrown up on the screen. To give you an example, I, Ross Siegel, have been given the Wu Name, "Inebriated Assistant." Jonah bayer, on the other hand, has been donned, "Spunky Misunderstood Genius." Use it wisely, soldier.

Videos

Godmoney- This feature length film comes from Darren Doane who seems to be a top producer for hardcore/punk bands' videos, most notably directing videos for No Motiv and Snapcase. I am no film expert, but technically this film looks great. It was shot very well, the lighting is excellent, and Doane used some special effects that really add to the film's appeal. However, the film is far from perfect. First off, the acting is not up to the standards of most other independent films I have seen. I mean, it's cool to use Rick Rodney from Strife (the protagonist), Fletcher from Pennywise, and

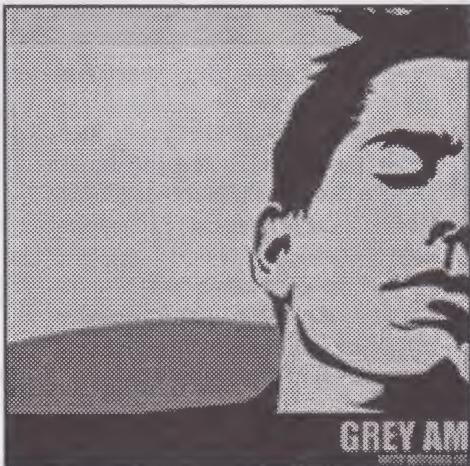
other members of the punk community in the movie, but let's face it... they're no Robert De Niro. Unfortunately, I don't think people outside the punk community are really going to care what band these people are in, they are merely going to see sub-par acting skills. It also seems like Doane sort of forced some of the punk songs into the soundtrack, and in some spots they really do not fit. For instance, an intimidating gang scene with Pennywise in the background just doesn't work. This is a good effort and I'm sure will get high marks within the punk community, but this film's weaknesses will simply prevent it from being taken very seriously (available through New Age Records).

Books

Jeff Ott "My World" (Sub City)- For those of you not familiar with Jeff Ott, he is a musician (*Fifteen, Crimpshrine*), political activist, and now author. On the cover this is described as the "ramblings of an aging gutter punk," and that is a pretty good summary of the book. Jeff says some really important things here that need to be heard, like the chapter about how punk is the politics of failure, and the fact that major labels can be good if the money is being donated to good causes. Jeff isn't afraid to speak his mind and if one reads between the lines there is hope of some educational worth. However, the good parts are overshadowed by the less interesting sections and overall lack of organization. While it is supposed to be rambling, at some parts it is just too hard to follow and looks like the paragraphs were lifted from random thoughts scribbled on a napkin. Also some of these sections are much too short and Jeff doesn't provide enough information or develop the argument he is trying to support, which is an imploration to be active. In summary, this book has some useful information and if you don't get frustrated by his writing style (which I did at times) it is a pretty educational and entertaining read.

The Grey AM

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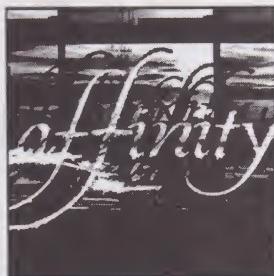
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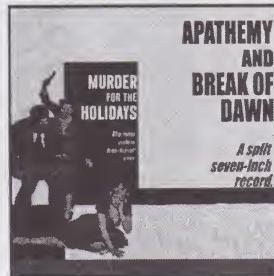
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I Love Love Line

by ROSS

Okay, lemme lay it on you. I know it may not seem like the coolest thing but I fucking love Love Line. For all those pretending they have never watched MTV in their lives or are way too punk to ever partake in the sometimes-joys that can be late-night mainstream radio, Love Line is a show that is broadcast on television and radio (in some places) twice a day. For all those wishing for a little bit of voyeuristic entertainment and the next best thing to sex ed, this may be the show for you. I know you've watched it, I know you've flipped through the channels late at night when it airs on MTV and paused there for at least 20 minutes. You can't fool me, and I know 'cause I used to be one of you people who denied myself the pleasures of pop culture's most misguided-yet-captivating creation (and don't even think about putting The Real World in the same category).

To be perfectly honest, I can't stand Love Line on television. I rarely watch television for more than 20 minutes at a time—other than occasional dives into Simpson territory—and after having interned at MTV a few summers ago I try to stay far away from the evil that is that particular station. However, when I am home in San Francisco and lucky enough to be driving around by myself on the way to this club or that punk rock show, I cannot go without satisfying myself with a little LL debauchery.

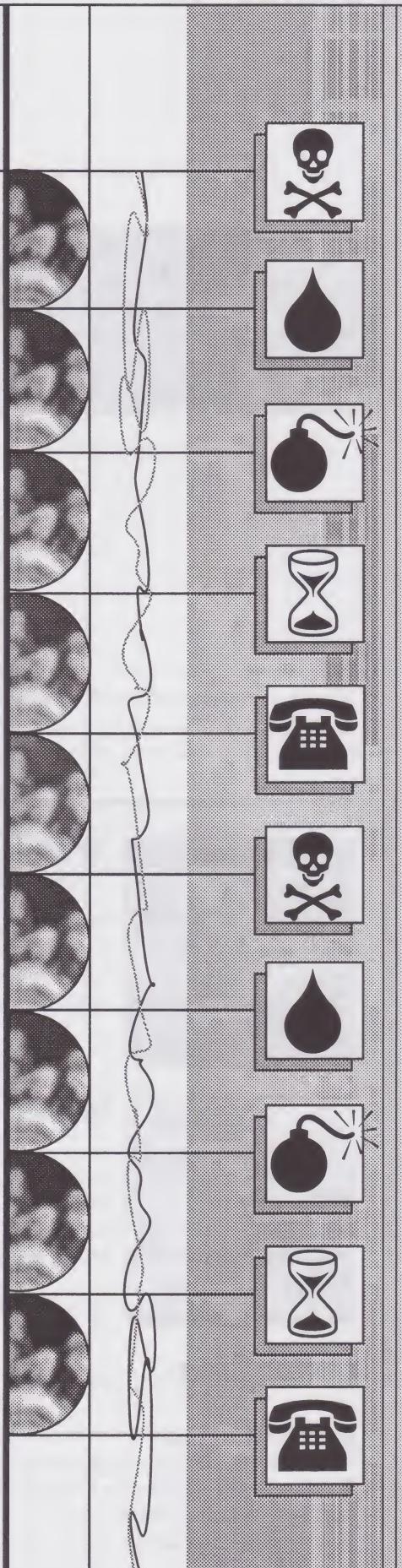
Sure, the show is ridiculous. Sure, Adam Carolla and Dr. Drew are really lame and think that just because they have a nationally syndicated show that means they are the be-all-end-all authorities on sex, drugs, and, well, even rock and roll on occasion. I just can't help laughing along whenever Adam makes a stupid crack about his penis size and I would never halt myself from making an angry face and screaming when Dr. Drew tells some poor kid that he is homosexual because of something terrible that happened in his past.

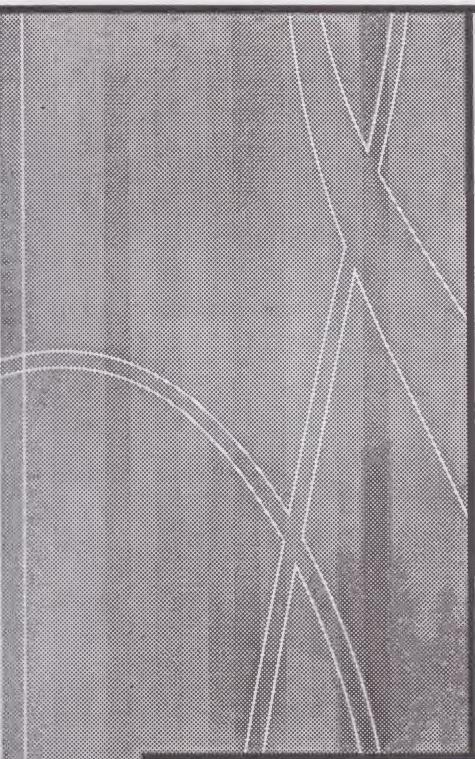
The whole thing baffles me, though. As much as I love to sit and tune into two naïve know-it-alls talk shop my true love is trying to figure out exactly why I do love it so much. And, I think there's more to the story than mere fascination with other people's property.

For one, who thought up the idea to have Dr. Drew—a physician who I'm pretty sure specializes in psychiatry, although I couldn't find any of his credentials on www.drdrew.com—a good looking, intelligent man paired off with Adam Carolla, who is perhaps the strangest looking, most hyper-sexual guy on the face of the planet. That little blurb at the end of the program is totally necessary when it says: "Love Line is for entertainment purposes only," as why anyone who would entrust the fate of their unborn child/ drug habit/ abusive father to these two guys is beyond me. I mean, they're both very conservative guys: Dr. Drew believes that lack of dominant father figures in a woman's life can lead to nymphomania or homosexuality or something along those lines, while Adam Carolla really just thinks with his cock and not his brain.

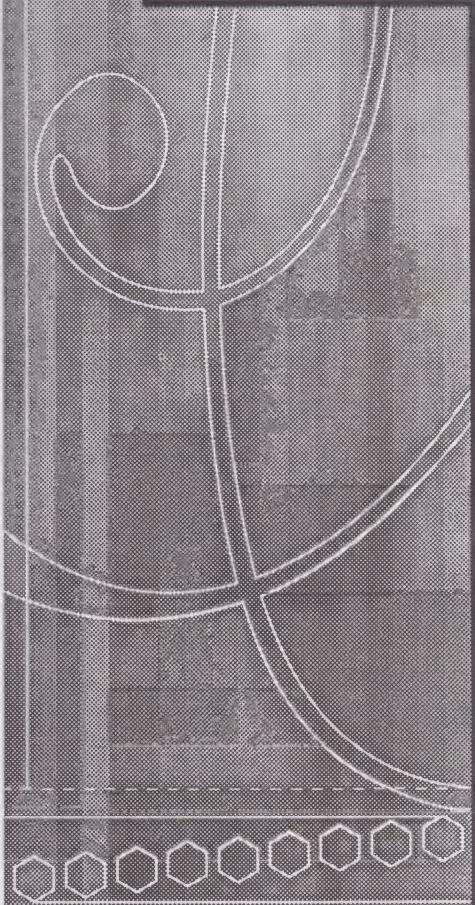
To make matters worse, I fear that Dr. Drew—Adam's own peculiarities aside—is clearly a very intelligent, if not diligent, doctor. It is quite clear to me that Dr. Drew studied hard in medical school and even... gasp... probably had a pretty successful medical practice at some point. I imagine one would be pretty hard pressed to find an average doctor who could name three different types of psoriasis found in the genital regions as I have heard Dr. Drew do on more than one occasion. It is also quite clear to me that Dr. Drew is an anti-feminist, insensitive, and quite conservative. For instance, if I had a nickel for every time I have heard him tell some poor girl that the reason she can't give enough blow jobs is because her dad mistreated her I would have about 50 nickels. And, what's really surprising is that he's usually right! When he asks those over-sexed girls or homosexual boys if their dads' abused them the answer he gets is usually in the affirmative. I hate to think of all the confused kids out there who believe that their insecurities are merely the result of lousy child-rearing! But enough about the good doctor, let's go on to Adam.

Adam Carolla is now probably best known for that ridiculous show he co-stars in on Comedy Central, The Man Show. It's obvious from watching the show that Mr. Carolla is also not a feminist. He is a bit of a misogynist and completely comfortable with his masculine indulgences. He was that kid in the back of your high-school civics class who would giggle wildly whenever the word "subpoena" was used. Although I know little of Adam's educational background, I would guess that his credentials for playing host on Love Line lay in the same place as the guys who wrote "Dumb and Dumber." Potty humor at its worst—or best depending on how you look at it. Adam serves as the comic relief for an admittedly very amusing show. He makes the penis jokes, talks about how much he masturbates, and probably never got laid in his life before his face was on MTV every weeknight for a year. I would also guess that Adam's input into the "therapy" given to callers is purely on a gut-





We adjourned to her room and rolled around on the bed for a while before she stopped me and said, "your lips are doing great, but you're not quite as perky as I would like you to be."



instinct basis and does not come from any actual knowledge of sex or sexually related disorders.

Well, you're most likely wondering why I sat down to write this article. No, it wasn't merely to tell you that I like a show then tear it apart. Instead, it was because I too have been a part of the Love Line escapade. Let me give you some background.

As many of you may have figured out from my article on infomercials in the last issue, I have never been truly down on my luck. Although I deal with the usual self-esteem and self-image issues that any 22 year-old goes through, I have never had to worry about not having a good friend to gush my feelings to. I have almost always had at least one person in my life at any given moment who I felt comfortable telling my worries, dreams, and passions to. At the same time, I've never really had much bad luck in the relationship department. While I've really only had one mind-blowing relationship in the girlfriend sense, I can turn on the charm with the ladies when I really set my mind to it. Therefore, I've never really gone too long without some form of sexual activity in my life. Plus, I've never really had any major problems when it comes to girls. Hence, I never related to nor understood the type of person that felt that the only way to find a therapeutic outlet for their emotions was by calling up two guys who make penis jokes interspersed with cocktail party trivia on the size of one's left frontal lobe. That is, until I broke up with a girl I had been dating last summer.

I really don't want to go into the details of that relationship (as I did in another zine you may be so [un]fortunate to pick up), but let's just say it ended badly with some passionless sex and some crying on my part. Needless to say I wasn't really in the love-making mood for a good month after the break-up. I was, how do I say this politely, having trouble getting a hard-on. After a few weeks of some failed attempts at masturbation—and keep in mind that I, like Adam Carolla, have never really had trouble in the hard part—I was getting kind of scared. I tried to tell a few people about it, including my doctor, but they said I was just stressed from my recent mid-terms and that everything would be as good as new after time. But, that's like telling a person with amnesia that

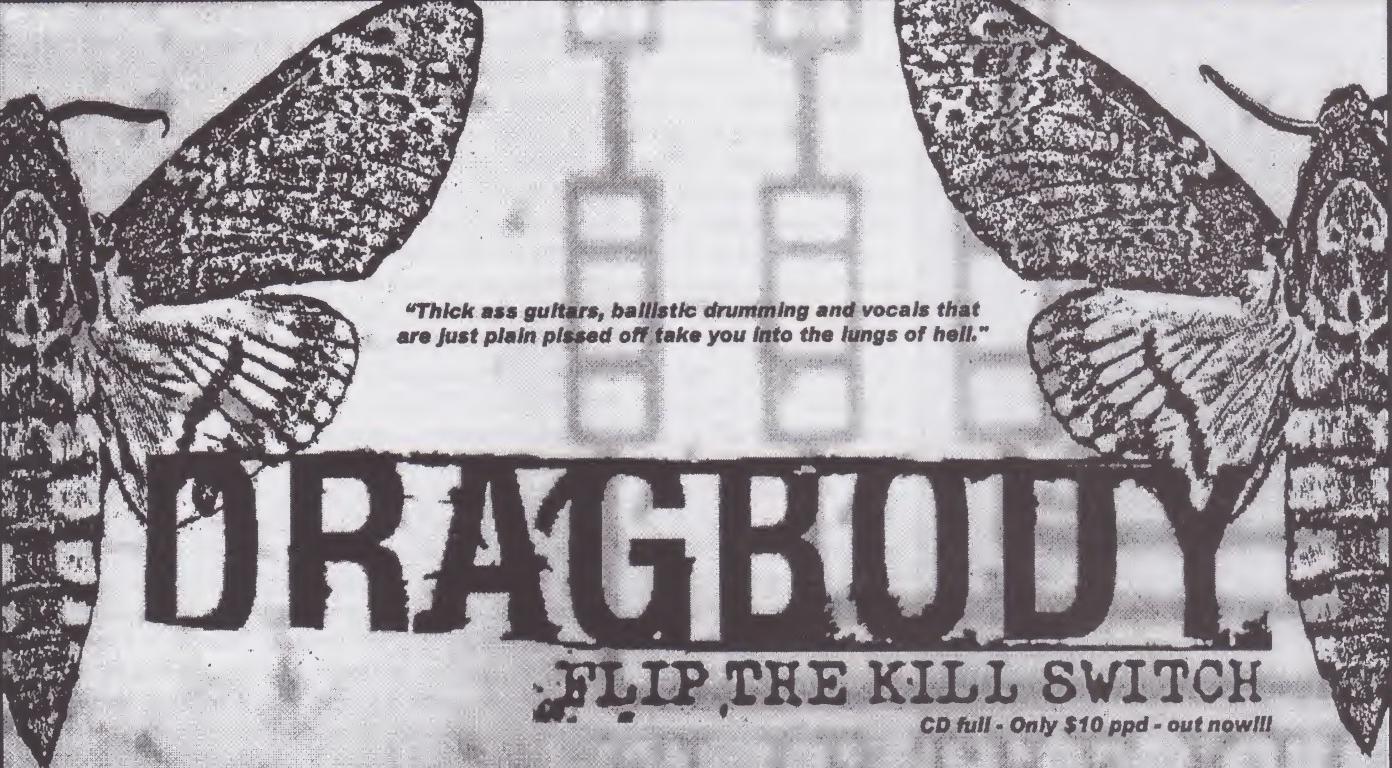
their life will be back to normal in no time at all: it's like throwing up a ball and not coming anywhere near the net.

About two weeks after I started getting really worried that I would never be able to pleasure a woman, much less myself, ever again I had an amorous encounter with a co-ed after a party I

had gone to with some friends. We adjourned to her room (the party was at her house) and rolled around on the bed for a while before she stopped me and said, "your lips are doing great, but you're not quite as perky as I would like you to be." Dismayed, I told her what had been going on and then said we should probably do this some other time when the circumstances were better. A sardonic nod was all she gave me as she put her shirt back on and rejoined the party. I walked home soon after that and flipped on a little LL for some relief from the pain burning holes where my temples used to be. Then it hit me. As some woman on the show recounted the worst sex she had ever had, I decided that I would call two of the most knowledgeable men on the face of the planet when it comes to failed sex.

My fingers could not dial the number fast enough, and after letting the phone ring for a good 3 minutes I got through! An especially curt female, the producer of the show I imagine, asked me: "what is your problem." I told her to which she replied: "that's it?" I answered a simple, "yes," and laughed nervously. I told her my age and she put me on hold for what seemed like a year. Then all of a sudden the phone clicked and I heard Adam on the screen say, "okay, you're Ross, and you're 22, you're live on Love Line." My forehead had never perspired so much. To make a long story short, I told them my problem, Adam told me that had never happened to him and he hoped it never would, and Dr. Drew told me to relax and go somewhere sunny. End of call. Click. Dial tone.

At first I was heartbroken. That was it? That was all the therapy I got from LL's hotshots on couches? Then again, what was I expecting, a house call? Needless to say, I soon got over my malady, the girl from that night never talked to me again, and I learned an important lesson: television and radio, in the Love Line format, are purely for entertainment and no problems are never solved through those particular modes of communication in the real world. Plain and simple. No great lessons about the values of friendship or anything sentimental like that. I realized that not all battles are meant to be fought, some are just meant to be waited out. And, the battles that are meant to be waged should not be with the help of a comedian and his doctor buddy. So, you ask me if I still listen to Love Line while driving around on those San Francisco nights? Of course I do. Do I laugh? Yes, sometimes a lot. Do I feel sorry for anyone who like me has invested time and energy into Love Line's supposed therapy? Not usually. But, I feel really sorry for the people who actually take the advice of Dr. Drew and Adam Carolla to heart.



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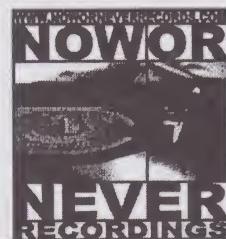
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LIFTER PULLER

by Dan

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(LOI-25)



There are plenty of bands in this world who rock hard, and without a doubt Lifter Puller is one of them. But I'm not sure if quite as many bands have a real artistic vision – a true idea of what creative direction they want to give to their music. Lifter Puller, despite the seemingly wild and chaotic nature of their music, seem to have a larger idea of what they want to accomplish with their art, and their phenomenal lyrics and jagged guitars work together to weave an imaginary world in which nightlife reigns supreme, a world saturated in bright lights, fast cars, and loose women, yet one which is also – forgive me for the hyperbole – tragically poetic. The intellectual brilliance of Lifter Puller, however, is easily matched by the band's immediate and visceral appeal. In other words, you can listen to Lifter Puller in two ways: you can view them as wild-eyed poets weaving complex tales of lost souls, or you can crank them up on the stereo and rock the fuck out. As for me, I've found myself doing both. Singer Craig Finn, whose distinctive vocal growl makes him as much of a spoken word artist as a singer, recently spoke to me about the band's cold days and hot nights in the bowels of clubland.

Your press sheet proclaims "Fiestas & Fiascos" to be a 'rock opera.' Is it?

No. Not necessarily. That's sort of a joke. The songs on the record are meant to thematically tell a story involving a cast of reoccurring characters, so it's probably more appropriate to call it a 'concept record.' To me a rock opera would mean different characters singing different parts, whereas "Fiestas & Fiascos" just tells a story.

Do you think the concept album has been given a bad name?

Oh yeah. Ours isn't even exactly a concept album in that it's intentionally open to interpretation. I tried to make it kind of clouded. The idea coming into the album was to make something that people can listen to and get something new out of each time, get into the layers of the story. But yeah, I can't think of any concept album that's ever been good. They have a bad name, and probably rightly so.

Then what inspired you to make a concept album, and what's the story meant to be?

The story centers around a fictional nightclub called the nightclub called the Nice Nice, and the reoccurring characters that have their misadventures there. The concept per se hasn't been fully fleshed out... all of our songs from this point on will revolve around it, though. One of the reasons I decided to make an album like this is that I felt that when you're writing lyrics people always assume that it's *you* talking, that it's always very personal and heartfelt when you're singing a song. The lyrics I had been writing weren't necessarily about me, so I decided to make them about characters.

How did you create the characters? Did you sit down and come up with character sketches before you even wrote the songs?

A little bit, yeah. I found that I was writing from a couple different perspectives that were familiar for me. There's one character that's kind of a 'fall from grace' character, someone who once was good but now has fallen into the bad crowd. And then there's some characters who are just bad.

Like Nightclub Dwight.

Nightclub Dwight is kind of the center of everything. Have you ever seen those VH-1 things about Studio 54? He's the owner. He's the guy with the drugs and the club and everything revolves around him. He's almost like Andy Warhol, but more sleazy and less artistic. It's his world and everybody else just wanders in and out of it. We have other characters, too... Jenny, the college girl, is one that keeps coming up. There's Juanita, who's more of a devilish figure, so to speak. There's Katrina the club kid... she's more of a big partier, but still young and more in it for the good times.

So you envision the Nice Nice as the locale in which all these people's paths cross?

Exactly. We just did another six songs for some 7's and comps and they all elaborate on it. It's all going to line up sooner or later. The story is going to progress on the next album.

Are your characters at least loosely based on people you know, or are they just sketches pulled out of thin air? Is there anything in Minneapolis approximating the Nice Nice?

Each character is a combination of a bunch of different people I know. There's a big nightclub scene here, but I think the Nice Nice would be seedier. Certainly, it's at least partially influenced by people I've met.

THE RAVE DICK

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I have this fascination with rave culture and I go to those things sometimes just to observe.

You write about that in a number of your songs. I don't feel like I know a whole lot about that scene, but I still like to go and watch. I'm 28, so most of the people at these things are younger, and I feel kind of removed from it, but really fascinated. It's a voyeuristic kind of thing.

Do you think the rave scene is at all analogous to the punk or indie rock scenes?

Absolutely, yeah. It's totally exciting. There's something really subversive about showing up in some rented warehouse and dancing to a huge sound system. Obviously there's an element of drugs, but more importantly there's dancing. More than anything I've ever seen, I think that scene concentrates on the music. More so than at rock shows, certainly, with the exception of maybe the Grateful Dead. And that, of course, is the one element of rave culture that turns me off. I really like the futuristic element of it all... it turns me on.

Have you tried to incorporate any of that into your own musical styles?

Well, there are at least three songs on the LP that we hadn't written when we went into the studio. We just went into the room and jammed for maybe three to five minutes total, and then dumped it all into a computer and cut it all up and made songs out of loops. We're playing standard rock instruments, like electric guitars and bass and drums, so it just sounds like a rock song, but in a lot of ways it isn't. We're trying to apply some of the same technology that's used in hip-hop records.

Do you envision a convergence of those styles in the future? It seems like it's already happening, in a way.

Yeah. I think we're already getting away from standard rock verse-chorus-verse structures. We don't come back to the same chorus a lot. We listen to a fair amount of hip-hop in our van when we're on tour, and that, more than electronica, is what influences us musically.

A lot of your songs seem saturated with references to sex and drugs. How come?

Much of what I wanted to do with this story was to discuss the search for something that people often find in alcohol and drugs, the search for euphoria. I wanted to talk about people's need to feel high. I do think the album discusses the consequences as well.

Were you worried about people thinking you were overly hedonistic?

Well, I can see why people would say that. To me, though, a lot of the lyrics are about community, about going out. They're about going to rock shows and people drinking together. I'd be worried about it more if we were a lot bigger, but I think that people usually figure out pretty quick that we're not all that hedonistic.

What if you did get a lot bigger? What if Rolling Stone called up tomorrow and asked to put you on the cover?

We'd do it, I'm sure. I used to think that bands like us don't really get popular, at least not as much as they used to, but I just saw Modest Mouse recently and there were like 1700 people there. So maybe you should be asking them. As for us, we played in Cleveland last week to an audience of 8 people. In general, though, people are starting to show up at shows of ours, even in other cities.

You have a number of releases that you put out before "Fiestas & Fiascos, right?

Yeah, quite a few.

I've tried really hard to get them and I've had a lot of trouble doing so. Do you not sell them anymore?

At the shows we still sell them. They don't really have distribution because they're all either self-released or on labels that are defunct. I've been talking to Chris [from Lifter Puller's record label, the Self-Starter Foundation] and it seems likely that he'll be reissuing some of it. In the meantime, it's good to know that people are trying to get our older stuff. Maybe when people finally get their hands on it they'll appreciate it more. I think that one of our albums, "Half Dead and Dynamite," might be on amazon.com.

Your new album is technically on two labels, Self-Starter and French Kiss. How did that happen?

We were looking around for a label and his name kept coming up because we had a lot of mutual friends. I knew of his label already... he'd already done some cool stuff. He'd put out records from Karate, and Compound Red, and Les Savy Fav, who are one of my favorite bands. Syd, the bass player for LSF, had a label called French Kiss and they teamed up together to put our album out. We've toured with LSF a lot... they're a great band to be associated with. They think very similarly to the way we do.

Has it been difficult for you to find like-minded bands?

Yeah, in a sense. We have a lot of friends in bands, of course, but LSF is a band we go very well with, both personality-wise and musically. Dillinger 4, who are from Minneapolis too, are great friends of ours too. We kind of come from two different scenes, but the people in Minneapolis don't seem to have a big problem with that.

Is Minneapolis still thought of as the Husker Du town?

Not really. It's actually really coming around. Last night, when we played with D4, there were 1400 people there. There's another local band called the Selby Tigers, there's Sean Na Na, and there are a bunch of bands from Minneapolis that are



starting to tour. We've always had some decent bands, but now we're starting to get the word out to the rest of the country. There's an absence of good record labels here, but there are a lot of venues and the bands are awesome. A lot of it has to do with our isolation... if you look at a map, Minneapolis is square in the middle of nowhere, and that really helps the local bands. Bands from out of town don't come through here a whole lot...

...which, in a way, can be a blessing in disguise. Because if you're a local band in New York City...

...then you're competing with everyone in the world for your local fans. In Minneapolis it's cheap to live, it's cheap to play music. It's a good place to be in a band. Also, people are locked up in their houses for the whole winter, so when we play in the spring or the summer, people are pretty psyched.

Is it true that all the buildings are connected with little tunnels?

Only downtown. Minneapolis is one of those cities where downtown is purely a business district, not a whole lot going on in the after-hours. When I worked downtown I was in a brokerage firm, and you could walk around the entire downtown area entirely indoors. It's kind of cool, but it's kind of not cool, because it makes the whole city seem like a mall.

The Mall of America is in Minneapolis too, right?

Yeah. The standard 'indie rock' response is that the Mall of America sucks, but you know what? I think it's fun. It has an aquarium, and a roller-coaster, and an amusement park...

I've been told that people who want to get their exercise will just jog circles around the mall.

And there's crazy thug behavior there, too. There are gang problems in the mall. Not too long ago someone got shot at Camp Snoopy, which is the amusement park in the mall. The mall has this whole

weird disenfranchised youth culture... there are a lot of weird kids hanging out there all the time. Lots of kids with Korn t-shirts.

I have a theory that every single mall in America, at all times, contains at least one kid with a Korn t-shirt.

Yep. They hang out at the stores that do piercings and sell hair coloring, and they spend all their time buying more Korn t-shirts. Last time I was there I saw some crazy goth kids with capes on and everything.

I view malls as a genuine subculture. A subculture that's very overground, but a subculture nonetheless.

I was listening to some Top 40 radio station, and they had a commercial for some bar that's in the Mall of America, and the commercial said "located in the upper East side." They didn't say it was in the mall... they just assumed you would know. They meant the top floor of the East side of the building.

I wonder how much business that place does in a day.

There are Japanese tourists that fly in just to go to the mall. It's insane. But they do sell the Lifter Puller CD there, even though I don't know if we're selling that well. Best Buy ordered a bunch of our CDs, which was kind of funny.

Some places like Wal-Mart won't take CDs that they consider objectionable. And, with all due respect, I think your CD would probably be considered objectionable.

I would say so. But the funny thing is this: because the CD is called "Fiestas & Fiascos," somehow it ended up in the Latin music section. All the world music aficionados are going to be sorely disappointed. There's a band called Enemy Mine – they're sort of the new Godhead-Silo – and my friend's boss went to buy the new Eminem record and accidentally ended up with Enemy Mine. I think it's a pretty good angle to name your band something similar to a guy who's selling tons of records.

You guys have been around for about five years. Did you play any music before Lifter Puller? Anything in college?

No, not at all. None of us really knew how to play that well when we were in college. I mean, yeah, we did have bands, but they were kind of a joke.

But that's how everyone gets their start. Every musician I've ever talked to was in a hundred failed musical projects before they found something successful.

The only way you get better is by playing with other people. We've finally achieved a level of cohesion with the band... I feel really confident playing with them. We've learned to play together, to lean up against each other musically. I don't know if I could do that with anyone else right now, because we've played together and learned together. Last night's show was the last night of our tour... it all went very easily. We were right on the ball.

Do you have another album on the horizon?

Yes. Now that we're back from tour, we're going to stay in town for a while to write it. I have some ideas, but we're going to have to figure a lot of stuff out. We'll hopefully record before the end of the year, but we don't feel like we're on any strict timetable. "Fiestas & Fiascos" came out in March so it's hardly an old album.

I hate to ask bands who their influences are, and I'm not going to ask you that musically, but just from listening to your lyrics, I hear a lot that sounds almost like a poem by Charles Bukowski. Are there any poets or authors who have inspired your writing style?

Thomas Pynchon is absolutely number one. I like "The Crying of Lot 49" because the book never really resolves whether or not the underground is as formalized as the protagonist thinks it is... in a sense, that's what "Fiestas & Fiascos" is supposed to be like. It's the type of album that people are going to figure out slowly. It's not like a book or a movie, it actually has a hidden message.

Well, one significant difference between albums and movies is that unless it's a phenomenal movie, most people aren't going to see it more than one or two times.

True. Very few things are re-seen or re-read, but you can put on a record a hundred times if it's good.

Do you think the concept of an album – as something meant to be listened to from beginning to end, rather than just a collection of songs – has gone out of style?

Yeah, I do. Obviously album-oriented rock has died, and these days it's all about singles, especially with CDs being so cheap to manufacture. It'll die out even more with MP3s. I really like going to movies rather than renting them, because it forces me to give 100% of my attention to it, and I wish it would be great if bands debuted albums the same way... almost like a booth where you go in and put on the headphones and listen to the album from start to finish. I'd pay to do that with the next Flam-

ing Lips record, for example.

The problem is that, for most people, records have become background music. If you're reading a book you can't do much else, but you can put on an album in the background and clean your room or whatever. It's like that discussion they have in "White Men Can't Jump"... you can listen to music a hundred times and never hear it.

I'm hoping that our listeners catch on to our concept slowly, because it's great when you listen to a record you've heard a hundred times and hear something new. I will say this, though: I really appreciate short albums. Our album is only thirty minutes, and that's pretty much the longest I'd want to listen to any band. More than three and a half minutes for a song is usually too much.

Even the songs you've done for compilations seem to tie in to your album because they share the same story structure.

Hopefully that'll create completists who want to collect everything we've done.

I'm trying to make our band like the "X-Files," where you don't need to see absolutely every episode to piece everything together. I'm trying to make

Lifter Puller be a soap opera.

Lifter Puller can be reached at www.lifterpuller.com

Photos by Tim Baier



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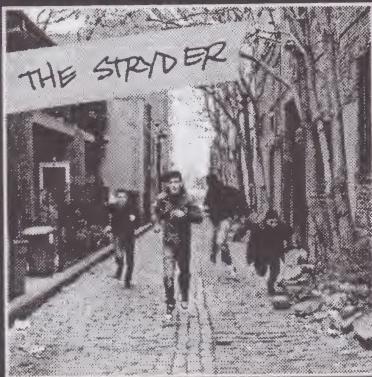
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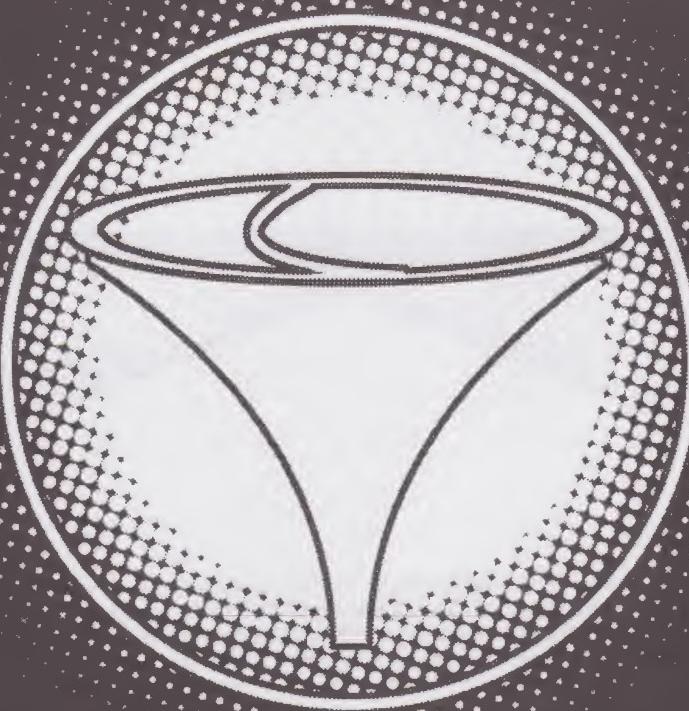
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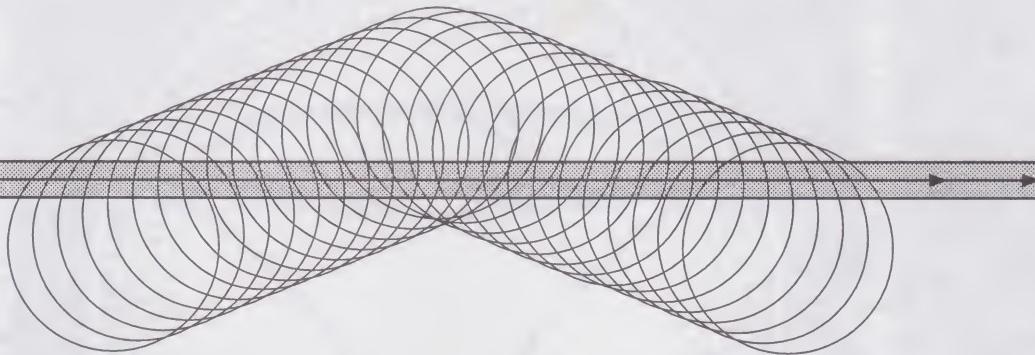
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From: law of inertia records
 To: punk rock lovers
 Subject: the pocket bomb compilation
 Sub-heading: featuring Hankshaw, Durian, Metroschifter, the 65 Film Show, Ann Beretta, Boxer, Angels in the Architecture, The Grey AM, The Alkaline Trio, Errortype:11, Co-ed, Park, Shiner, Ashes, Gods Reflex, and more.

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Ross' [LOI's Publisher, burgeoning Metal-head, hates the Locust] Top Ten Best Movie Sex Scenes That I've Seen Recently

- 10) Say Anything: Backseat at the beach and daddy doesn't approve.
- 9) Top Gun: C'mon, you know you loved it. I think this is where I found out what french kissing was.
- 8) Like Water For Chocolate: Nothing like a little sex to burn down the house.
- 7) Basic Instinct: Um, those infrared glasses were pretty cool. And, my friends know how I love those psycho girls.
- 6) Body of Evidence: Madonna. Willem DaFoe 'Nuf said.
- 5) Cruel Intentions: Okay, this wasn't sex, but Sarah Michelle Gellar & Selma Blair kissing Need I go on?
- 4) Sea of Love: It's no wonder this was Al Pacino's comeback movie.
- 3) Existenz: Does a bio-port have a G-spot?
- 2) I'm Gonna Get You Sucka: Prosthetic limbs, false teeth, and fake breasts. Ah, sounds like my last date.
- 1) Out of Sight: I never had a thing for Jennifer Lopez. I do now.

Dan Frantic's [Former LOI co-editor, loves Pulp, on his way to Scotland] Top 10 Records In My Stereo

- 10) The Locust S/T
 - 9) Mouse on Mars "Nun Niggung"
 - 8) M.I.J. "The Radio Goodnight"
 - 7) Air "Virgin Suicides Soundtrack"
 - 6) Supergrass S/T
 - 5) Blackalicious "Nia"
 - 4) Lifter Puller "Fiestas & Fiascos"
 - 3) Amon Tobin "Supermodified"
 - 2) Beulah "When Your Heartstrings Break"
 - 1) The Faint "Blank Wave Arcade"
- Nick Powers' [LOI columnist, all around asshole] Top Ten Mesh + Foam Baseball Cap Slogans**
- 10) "I love my bad attitude"
 - 9) "Live to ride, ride to live"
 - 8) "World's #1 stepdad"
 - 7) "My other hat is a Stetson"
 - 6) "I'm their leader- which way did they go?" (with two brims)
 - 5) "We interrupt this marriage... for hunting season"
 - 4) "I'm CEO- in charge of diddly-squat"
 - 3) "We interrupt this marriage... for racing season"
 - 2) "OLD FART"
 - 1) "It's hard to be humble when you're from West Virginia"

Jonah Bayer's [Alternative Press intern, still hates Drive-thru, likes Good Burger] Top Ten Punk Bands That Haven't Broken up yet (Although You Wish They Would)

- 10) Any band on Nitro Records (except AFI)
- 9) Face to Face
- 8) The Misfits
- 7) Vision of Disorder
- 6) Chamberlain
- 5) Youth Brigade
- 4) E-Town Concrete
- 3) Biohazard
- 2) SNFU
- 1) Murphy's Law

du prosperio's [LOI reviewer, former radio promotions dude, hates pop punk] Top Ten

- 10) Gabba Gabba Hey- 9 years old, and still the best tribute record
- 9) (International) Noise Conspiracy
- 8) www.worldofbeats.com
- 7) Industrial shelving
- 6) EgoTrip's Book of Rap Lists (text) & The Big Playback (soundtrack)
- 5) "Yakety Moog" (an old 45)
- 4) Modulations (video)
- 3) Death Race 2000 (film)
- 2) Cockspurrier live
- 1) driving cross-country with an assumed identity

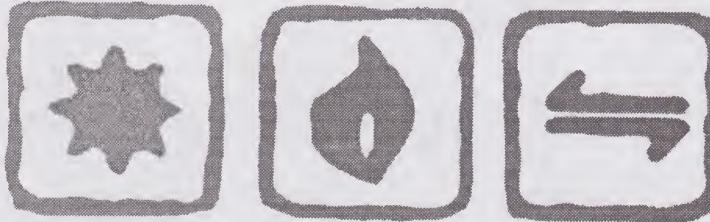
Tim Holden's [LOI mascot, columnist, wishes he wrote for Playboy circa 4 years ago] Top Ten Least Favorite Burns

- 10) Indian Burns
- 9) Rug Burns
- 8) Robert Burns
- 7) "It burns when I pee!" Burns
- 6) Hot ember from Bottle Rocket Burns
- 5) Pepper Spray Burns/Montgomery M. Burns (tie)
- 4) Pasty white guy meets Caribbean Sun Burns
- 3) "Forgot the f#@#ing Gold Bonds!" Burns
- 2) Drunk dude wildly gesticulating with cigarette Burns
- 1) Those goddamn, motherfucking, napalm, pizza cheese Burns

Tim Holden's Top Ten Favorite Summer Movie Bombs

- 10) Last Action Hero
- 9) Godzilla
- 8) Hudson Hawk
- 7) Anything with Sean Young or Ernest
- 6) Star Wars: Episode I
- 5) Speed 2: Electric Boogaloo
- 4) Judy Dench does Dallas
- 3) The Conan movie with Wilt the Stilt and Grace Jones
- 2) Batman and Robin
- 1) Groove (My fingers are crossed)

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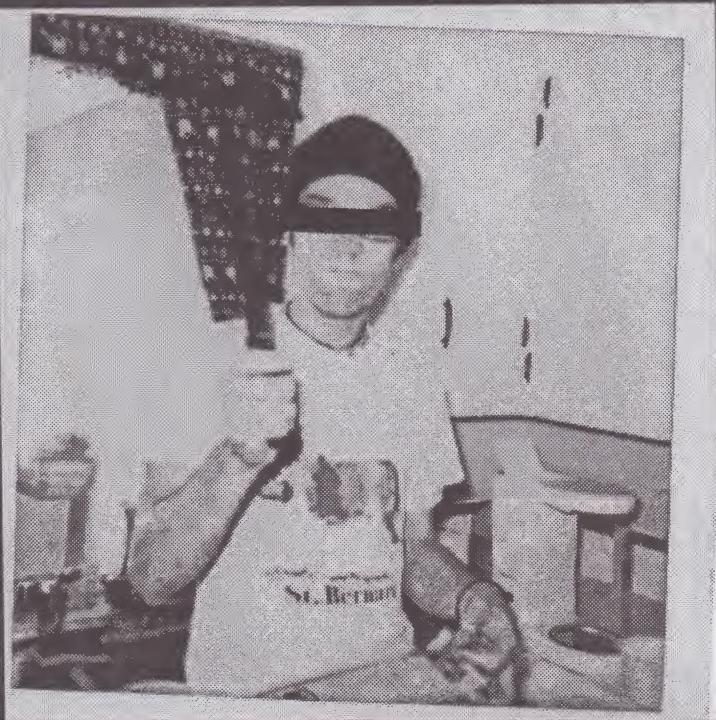
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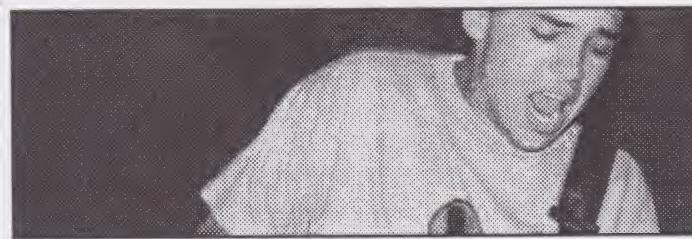
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By Ross



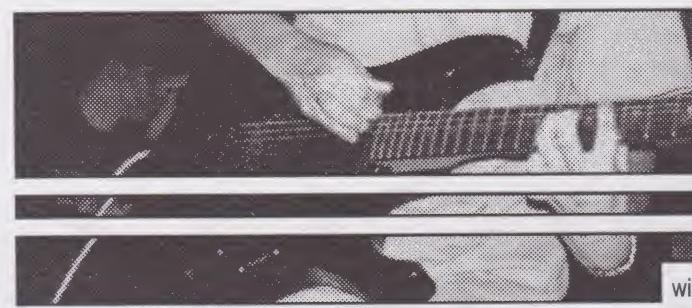
first getting into punk rock and everyone playing in bands seemed so old?

Real old. One of the first bands I liked was Torn Apart since I used to live in Maryland and they were all in high school then. But, yeah, most of the bands I listened to seemed much older. I would watch them and think that they knew so much more than I did, at least in terms of how to play their instruments. Now here we are and we're all around the college age and it seems like we're still a bit younger than most of the other touring bands in hardcore, although we're probably not.



So what do you think about being younger than most other bands?

I think it's pretty cool. Since we're younger we've kind of got a jump start on a lot of other bands that may be older or even kids our age playing in bands who might wait a few years to start getting serious. We just went out



with Stretch Armstrong and they're all getting married and having kids and stuff. That must make it really hard to tour regularly and commit a lot of time to the band.



I've heard that Chad from Shai Hulud and now A Newfound Glory is really young.

He would be in twelfth grade now. The Florida scene seems to be a lot like that. The Florida scene is really young. It's mostly made up of high school kids and people just entering college. Here we're not that much different in age than most of the kids in the scene. There are only a few older people involved in hardcore in South Florida. One of them is John from Eulogy Records, he's twenty-five. He's the godfather of the South Florida scene.

Does that make it weird? I mean, do a lot of kids think they're too old for hardcore once they turn a certain age?

Down here a lot of kids are real into hardcore but once they go to college they forget about it. It's really discouraging to think that people you go to shows with or that come see us play may just forget about everything we've worked to build once they turn twenty-one. People really don't get what's going on. They like the music and the social aspect of going to shows but I guess they don't relate to the whole principal behind hardcore.

In your opinion, what is the main principal behind hardcore?

It's an alternative lifestyle in every sense. As far as what you put in your body, what kind of music you listen to, where you shop, how you think. It's an alternative reality. A lot of people down here don't get that. They just think it's a fun thing to do and get into until college comes and then they forget it and become like everyone else. They like the social aspect and not the cultural aspect. You know, they're straightedge until they turn eighteen and get a fake ID.

But, it's funny because all the people I know from Florida who are active in the scene beyond the role of a spectator are older.

Well yeah, Amy from Fiddler, John from Eulogy, Susan from Punk Uprisings, and a handful of others are basically the only older people in the scene. It sucks but no one is quite sure how to change it. But, the bands tend to be young too, like xDestroX, Shai Hulud, Glasseeater. There aren't tons of kids who go to shows but the kids who do go are all really close here so at least that's cool.

Other than the unity, no-fighting thing that everyone talks about, where would you like to see hardcore go in the future?

Hm, I think it's going in a pretty good direction now. You have a lot of bands that aren't interested in sounding like every other band which is cool and hasn't always been the case. I also think there is a pretty strong hardcore sound in mainstream music now with bands like the Deftones and Slipknot. I would like

I only discovered Poison the Well recently. I knew a girl who was dating their guitarist and she raved about how they were going to be the biggest thing in South Florida hardcore since Shai Hulud moved to Poughkeepsie. I was unimpressed, as the girl and I totally disagree on our musical tastes, but I decided to give them a shot when the CD came in the mail out of courtesy to her boyfriend. So, instead of passing their new disc on Trustkill over to someone on the LOI staff of over-paid, over-educated professional music critics I popped the disc in my stereo. And, to my surprise, my friend was right and it fucking rocked! Everything about their music—from the amazingly brutal guitar/bass/drums assault, to the quick bursts of melody—impressed me and I could immediately tell that this band was doing something different. So, I quickly called up the nice people at Trustkill and requested an interview. A day later I was on the phone with Poison the Well's bassist, Alan. Here is what I got.

Okay, what's the band been doing lately?

What has the band been doing lately? Well, we've kind of been on break lately. Derrick, one of our guitarists, just got accepted to college so he's starting at Florida State this summer. So, we're going to have to bring along another guitarist for the summer tour. We have this kid Matt from Ohio who plays in Twelve Tribes as well.

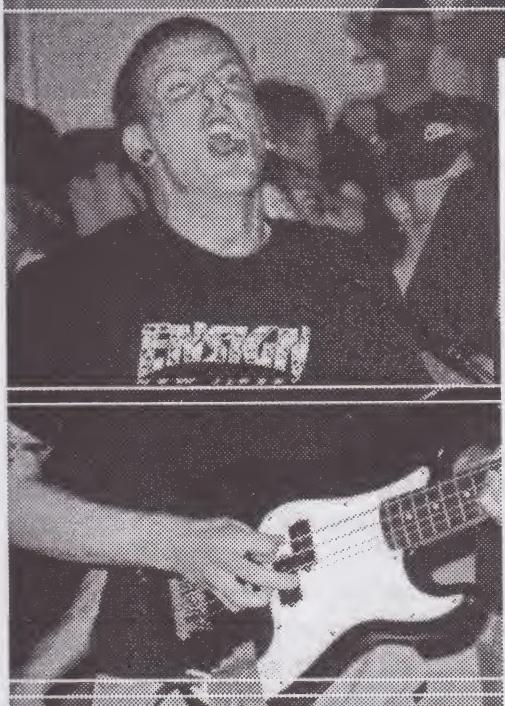
You've done a few tours with them, right?

Yeah, we've done four tours with them and we're going out again with them this summer. He's a cool guy and he's a great guitarist so it should be cool.

From what I understand you guys are pretty young.

(laughter) Um, two people, our drummer and our guitarist, just graduated high school. I'm twenty; Ryan our other guitarist, just turned 22. It's pretty much eighteen to twenty-two.

Wow! Do you remember when you were a kid and you were



to see hardcore ethics comes more into play. Yeah, there's the no fighting, unity stuff, but I would love to see hardcore not be as commercial and exist on more of an underground level. I mean, sure you're going to have the Revelations and Victoys who are pretty commercial as it is, but I'd love to see more kids in hardcore bands who are appreciated and accepted even if they're not on the bigger labels. Like a real underground or something. Just because a band rocks doesn't mean they can only be successful on a big label. When it comes down to it, if I wanted to be in a band that sold a million copies I wouldn't be playing hardcore, now would I? Plus, I like the idea that kids can get our CD pretty much anywhere for around ten dollars. We want to do this on our terms. That's one of the reasons we picked Trustkill. It's a real good label, but Josh is an awesome guy too.

So, how did you get into hardcore in the first place?

Um, I saw a Damnation show when I was fifteen. I used to live right outside of Washington DC, and I did graffiti with this kid named Chris and he took me to the show. Torn Apart and this band called Option also played. I used to skate to bands like Gorilla Biscuits and Minor Threat but I wasn't really into any bands that were around at the time. So, I fell in love with it and started going to shows every weekend.

When did you move to Florida?

My family moved here about two years ago. My dad went bankrupt and he moved down here to start over. I met a bunch of kids going to shows down here and I got a spot in Poison the Well. About a year ago my parents moved back up North and I decided to stay down here and keep doing the band.

The band was together before you joined, right?

Yeah, they had already recorded the EP on Goodlife and actually the first show I played with them was the show after the CD release party for the Goodlife disc. I actually sang for two practices for the band. For the EP there were two singers, like dual vocalists, and one was out of the band by the time I joined. So Derrick told me there was a vocal opening and I tried

out. Everyone was into it but during the second practice my voice totally crapped out. So,

that wasn't going to happen. But, they needed a bass player at the same time so I took that position and left my singing career behind. (laughter) A few weeks later we got Jeff as a singer, and on a tour this last winter we had Jeff and Ari singing and then we decided to only keep Jeff. We've had like seven lineup changes since the band started, including me. It's going to be tough with Derrick at college but we're going to see how it goes.

What do you do when you're not rocking the house?

Well, I went to college and stopped for the band and now I work at Blockbuster.

I think half the American hardcore community either works at Kinko's or Blockbuster. (laughter) Just to change the focus for a second, isn't it weird that you say the Florida scene is really small yet you have so many great bands?

Well yeah, I think kids down here that are in the scene are forced to be creative and start projects since they realize no one is going to do it for them. You know, we're at that time where if we don't start bands and put on shows or put out zines or something then it's just not going to happen.

What band draws the most people in the Miami area?

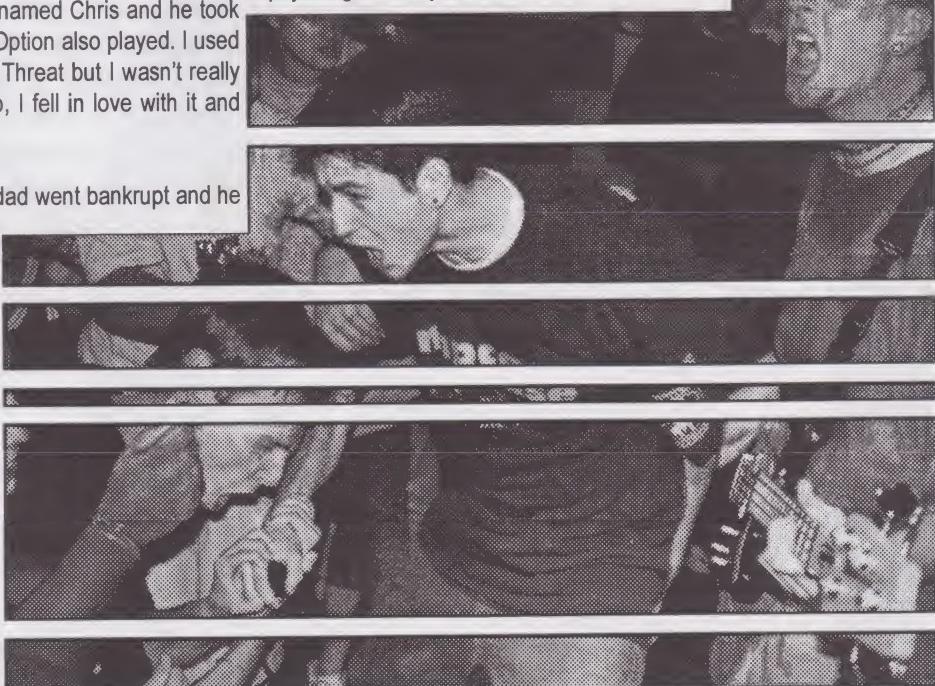
Probably us and Glasseater are the two bands from here that can consistently draw over a hundred kids. A lot of the bands from Gainesville like Hot Water and Discount can draw a lot down here too, but as far as bands from this area are concerned we do pretty well for ourselves. Where Fear and Weapons Meet does pretty well. Kids down here know how to rock, they're just few and far between.

Tell me about Until the End.

Well, Until the End is a straightedge project I'm doing with John Wylie. He's playing guitar, I'm singing, and Chris from Poison the Well is playing drums. We just recorded and we have a new CD coming out on Equal Vision in the fall. I always wanted to be in a straightedge band and this is our chance to do that as well as help rebuild the scene a bit. I mean, straightedge really died when Morning Again broke up. They seemed to keep kids really fired up and excited about being in hardcore as well as being substance free. A lot of kids lost their edge after they broke up. So, maybe Until the End will get more kids back into it.

Alan, who's had the most psycho girlfriends in the band?

Um, I just got out of a nice one. I dated this girl who drank way too much and when you combine that with me being straightedge it's not a good combination. Plus, I think that our band attracts psycho girls. They love us.



Paul Siegel: Political Commentary by Dad

I grew up respecting the President as a heroic figure. The best America had to offer with unbridled powers to do good things for the world. Many of our forefathers were brilliant iconoclasts who were unafraid of controversy and would often make decisions because they were the right ones and not always bend to the politically popular view. Politicians have always had to compromise. I know that, but the Washingtons, Jeffersons, Lincolns, and FDRs had a vision and pursued it regardless of whether it was popular.

What I have seen in the last forty years is a great disappointment to me. The candidates for the Presidency are a mediocre bunch! Just look at who is running today: the Democrat (Gore) is the son of a powerful senator born into political power. His personality, dress, and agenda all have been carefully cultivated to make all of us feel that he acts Presidential. His critics suggest that he is a "natural born phony." He was bred by his famous father (Senator Al Gore of Tennessee) to bring him the Presidency. He is a man who measures every word and on occasion makes huge blunders such as his silly claim that he invented the internet. Have you ever heard this man talk? He is a yawn. If he has a strong vision or theme, then I am unaware what it is. He is just a suit as far as I am concerned. The polls seem to be reflecting his weak personal image as well. He does not seem to escape the label of "safe but boring." I think that such a man is unlikely to give the country clear direction or initiate bold new policies.

The Republican (Governor George W. Bush of Texas) has also been groomed by a Presidential dynasty. He is not charismatic either but does have a little more bite to his personality. He seems to say many of the "right" conservative things (like guns are right and abortions are wrong) and has no vision either. He doesn't seem to be very smart. His family name got him into Yale and his grades were lousy. He has had

shady business dealings in his past and seems to be a good-old-boy, slap-the-back politician. His only real political experience has been as the governor of a huge state. However, Texas has been a comparatively weak system and Bush does not have that much to do. The economy is great and so things look good in Texas, but he has not had a lot to do with it (instead, Texas remains one of the friendliest states to big-business and one of the most hostile towards the environment.) His governing ability is unproven. At least Gore was a senator and then Vice-President for eight years.

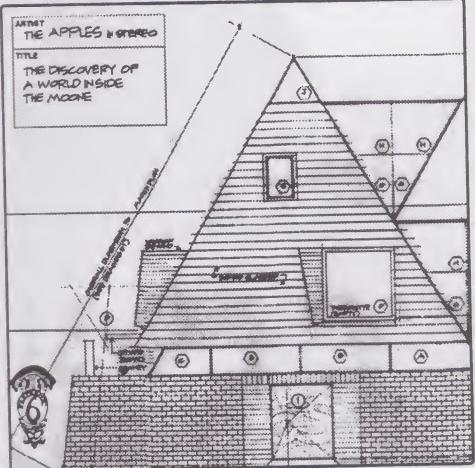
One of them will be the next President. This means we will once again go another four or eight years on cruise control. None of the big problems--such as health care--we face today will be resolved. But, we might get a tax cut, which, sadly one of the only raging issues right now. The fact is that the President cannot do that much anyway because Congress is taking back some of its lost powers. One could argue cynically that the American people like this because it means that no new laws will be passed that can affect our lives. Maybe this is why the stock market has been so strong. Less government, happier people.

Yet, the President is still the leader and we should still hope for greatness from him/her. Why have these new Presidents become so boring? It's the media, stupid. More than ever before, politicians' every movement and action are placed under the scrutinizing microscope of the press. The President has to now look and sound Presidential. He cannot look like a schlump even if he were perfect in any other way. He cannot be bald, too short, divorced, gay, a businessman, bearded, fat, or a minority. He has to be a Wasp who looks good on the tube. If he has any blemishes in his career, the press will destroy him and his family. This is why we now have "Teflon" Presidents. I wonder if the great Presidents of the past could have made their famous decisions in today's environment. Probably not as their poll ratings would plummet.

Some day the American people will become sick of mediocrity. I only hope that happens in our lifetimes.

Mr. Siegel is the father of everyone's favorite zine editor, Ross. He is also one of the most astute political analysts we know.

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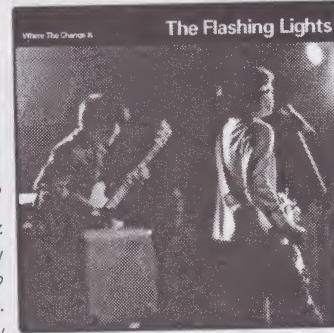
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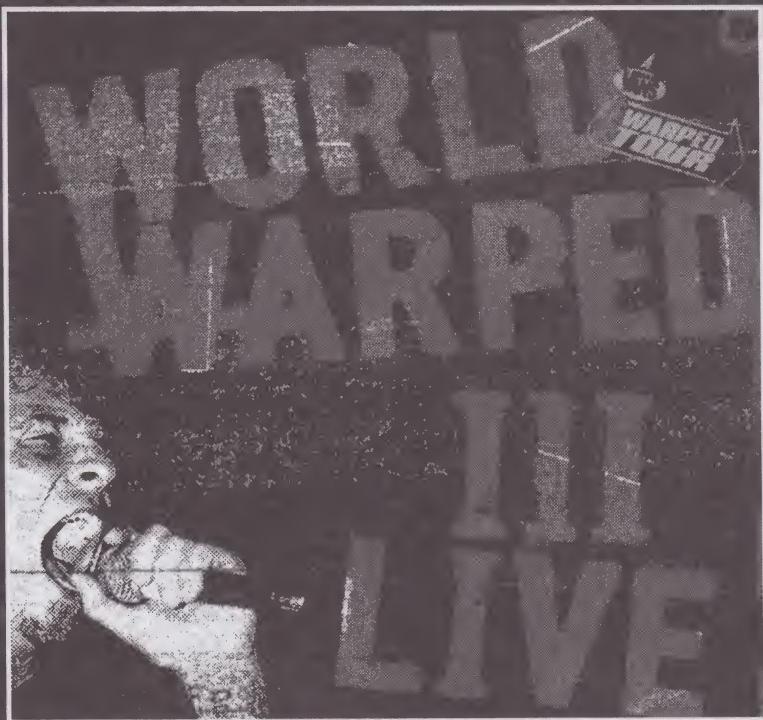
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67
Going On

by Ross

6 Going On 7 are a truly unique band. Approaching pop music in an unmistakable way, yet still remaining fresh and original. Combining a tightly coiled bass sound with lush guitars, not to mention the gorgeously rough vocals, their take on indie rock is unlike any other out there. I kept on meeting up with them and singer/bassist, Josh English, in various states where we'd exchange stories and chat on the state of indie rock. So, I thought it high time I interview one of the more intelligent and thoughtful musicians—to go with his intelligent and thoughtful band—I've ever met. I had a lot of questions for Josh and pretty much threw them all out the window once we began chatting about this band. Josh always seems to be more articulate than most, and always manages to express himself in words just as well as in music. So, one never needs a script with him. 6 Going On 7 is possibly one of the most romantic bands out there (and they're going to hate me for saying that) and I urge everyone to run to the store and check them out!

Josh, what would you be doing if you weren't playing music?

Hmm, that's tough. It's been in my life... it's been my entire life for as long as I can remember, so it's hard to imagine my life without it. I'm interested in art, though, in addition to music. I've done drawing and painting for a long time. I'm also really into tattooing although I don't do it, but I'd like to learn. I don't think I could ever dedicate the proper amount of time to the visual arts, though, since music basically takes up all my time. It is my life right now and we're not even doing all the stuff we could be. But yeah, I would love to explore the visual arts and tattooing if I weren't doing music.

That's an interesting place to start. I mean, you guys most readily fit into the indie rock sound, whatever that means, and you don't see many indie rockers with as many tattoos as you have.

I guess that maybe thanks to my musical background. I grew up in Portland, OR, and when I was about 13 or 14 was probably the first time I saw a real punk show.

Who'd you see?

Poison Idea, and my gym partner was Jerry A's little brother. That's how I got into punk: he used to make me these mix tapes that I thought were awful and then one day it kind of clicked and I fell in love.

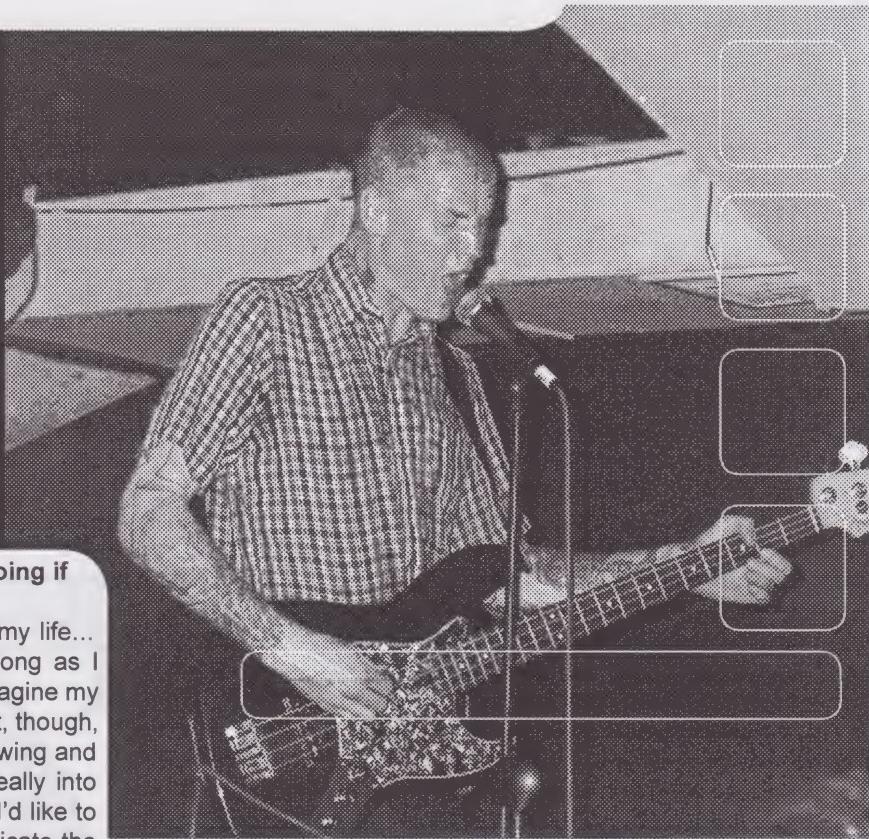
I think that type of thing happens to everyone in punk.

Yeah, and I was totally not into it before that. Actually I was kind of a metal kid before I was punk. So, I was used to intense music.

Now, are we talking glam metal...?

I was never into Warrant or anything like that [too bad Josh, too bad]. I was into more of the 'metal' metal like Judas Priest. I was into the stuff that was considered heavy in the 80's, like Iron Maiden and Slayer. I remember that when I got "Reign in Blood" it was the same thing as punk. One day a friend gave it to me and I thought it was horrible and then a few days later I thought it was the best thing I'd ever heard! Then everything else sort of paled in comparison.

After that, I got turned on to Black Flag and Agent Orange and the Drunk Injuns



and the Exploited. Poison Idea I always had a soft spot for just 'cause they were local and I could see them a lot. At that time they would break bottles over their heads and set stuff on fire, it was great. I would get dropped off in front by my parents and they would pick me up at midnight at these crazy shows. Everything else I was listening to was at the other end of the spectrum like the Cure and Depeche Mode and Tears for Fears....

Oh yeah, get their greatest hits CD, it fucking rules!

Yeah, I've heard. But back then those bands were a bit less mainstream and from there I also got into some of the goth stuff like Bauhaus. Those bands were sort of darker sadder indie rock than what I play today. Those Cure and Depeche Mode songs were amazing!

Do you think that type of stuff has any bearing on how you write songs today?

No, I definitely don't. The biggest influence it had on me was that the Cure, for instance, used the bass as a primary melodic force, their music wasn't just all guitars and keyboards. That was really the first time I ever took notice of the bass. There are very few bands out there that you can think of a popular song and hum the bass line, but I could generally hum the bass line for most of the Cure's songs. Those parts were so memorable unlike those of most punk bands or other popular bands at the time. My mom was a music teacher and she always had a really good record collection, so I was exposed to stuff like Diana Ross and other Motown stuff, and at the same time she listened to a lot of contemporary popular music. She was curious so I guess I got curious as well. She would come home and

be like, "oh, I got 'Purple Rain' today," and I'd be like, "you can't buy that, that's my music!"

Yeah, the hippest my parents ever got was James Taylor.

(laughter) **Getting back to the bass topic, when you listen to**

a 6 Going On 7 song you hear the bass first and foremost.

It seems like you guys write bass lines and then just throw everything else on top or the bottom around it.

I was recently telling someone that our writing style has changed

a bit over the course of the band's existence. I'll come in with lyrics and a melody and say to Will and James, "hey, what do you

think?" It's weird, but I play bass much better than guitar so I just

tend to write with a bass in mind and not so much with a guitar

riff or texture. I think the sound of the band was defined that way

a little bit, but I also think that the way we write our songs they

could have come out a million different ways. I also think the tone

of the bass and guitar may function as opposite. The bass is very

springy and piano-esque, while James does a lot of cyclical guitar

lines, so that lets me do more melodic stuff as opposed to just

holding down the root. We work on that a lot. Will and I will go

through an entire set with just bass and drums just to make sure

we're locked in and tight.

What I think is the best thing about "Heartbreak's Got Back-

beat" is that record has a more textured, almost layered

sound than "Self-Made Mess" did.

Our mindset going into the first record was that we had a sound

that we felt worked really well live. We had all been in bands

before and all been in the studio before, but we really wanted to

try and capture the type of sound that would be us if someone

basically put up a microphone in our practice space and pressed

record. We were real careful to not do harmonies or any embellish-

ments that would give it a fuller sound. I had a lot of ideas

that I wanted to pursue on the first record that we decided against

because we felt it would make the record a bit too slick, and that's

not what we wanted. We wanted something that was very similar

to our live show. By the second record we said "fuck it" and we

decided to use those embellishments and make the record we

wanted to make. It's nothing we resent doing, but we just grew as

a band and so did our ambitions.

Can you tell me about the next record you're writing?

Sure, I think that if you put all three records-- the third record

being the one we're writing right now-- in a row it would make per-

fect sense and seem like a logical progression. We have like 15

unreleased songs that we just never released 'cause we weren't

happy with them for some reason or another. We're really picky.

The next record is going to follow the trend of, as you say, us

getting bigger and more textured. If the first record was about

capturing our live sound and the second was about trying new

ideas and making the sound more textured, then the third record

will hopefully be a marriage of the two. The songs will be able to

stand on their own but will really benefit from what we put on top

of it. Another thing is that the first record was written in the first 3

years of the band. We had our entire existence up until that point

to work on songs. But, we were also working on coming together

and our live show and basically presenting ourselves. The next

record was just a year's worth of ideas after "Self-Made Mess,"

so you might say we became much more focused. One song that

a lot of people love the most, "Sexy Like the Titanic..."

Yup, that's my favorite song too.

Yeah, we wrote that only a day or two before we went into the studio for the first record. So that shows that we chuck a lot of stuff away. We're neurotic.

Why don't you play that anymore?

Well, James doesn't like to play certain songs because for some reason he's not into them anymore. That was so long ago and we played it so many times that he just got sick of it, I think. (laughter)

Okay, let's change gears for a second. Every time I see you, you tell me about the Elliott Smith thing.

Oh yeah! (laughter) You're going to get me on this one, huh?

No getting out of this. Our readers expect nothing less.

Well, Elliott Smith, or Steve Smith as his yearbook picture

says, went to my high school. He was a senior when I was

a freshman. I'm not that familiar with where he came from,

but I remember seeing him play in this prog rock band and

he had a pink paisley guitar. They were called Stranger than

Fiction and he was a great musician so I think I looked up to

him. He's an amazing guitarist. The guy would never remem-

ber me from high school. If anything he'd remember me from

bands we played in high school. I don't want to focus too

much on that, 'cause people will think I'm just name dropping

when really all I did was go to the same school as the

guy for one year.

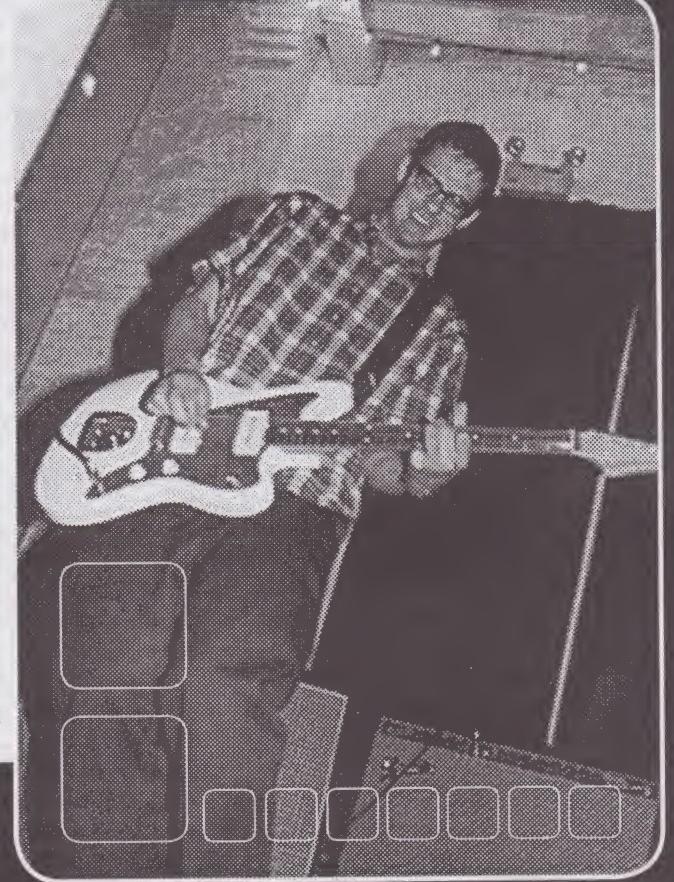
Oh don't worry, we'll cut this part out. Okay, let's

talk about how you guys fit into the indie scene or

the Boston scene or the punk and hardcore scene.

I imagine that a lot of the bands you guys play with are on a different wavelength than you are.

Your band is really a very unique pop band when





core label in Some Records and you tour with bands like Elliott. So, when you get up there and everyone knows the emo-type sounds of a band like Elliott-- who you played with with last time I saw you guys-- what's the reaction?

I think we get a very mixed reaction. I think initially I would have perceived it as a lukewarm reaction, but usually when we play out of the

way from our own style of music that we have some releases on Some which is an up and coming label, I think people may be a bit more exposed to us than on our first few tours. You're right, we don't totally fit with Elliott since we're not emo or whatever, and we have no ex-members of big bands for people to compare us to, and sometimes that's all you need for acceptance. It's mixed.

You once told me that you hate emo with a passion. Why?

I hate it. I really do. It's so funny that you of all people ask that 'cause one of the reviews you gave us was something like, "the quintessential emo band."

I said that? Oh God! (laughter)

No don't worry, it was in reference to the heart on the cover of our first record more than our sound. I guess for me, I'm older and emo wasn't around when I was growing up. I grew

up with Bauhaus and the Cure, as I said, and that stuff is more like depressed love songs. If there's anything emo in our music, and if I like any "emotional" music, then that's what I'm referencing. But, don't think I'm referencing the Getup Kids or a lot of those other bands as emo, 'cause those bands are basically just pop bands. I don't listen to that stuff and I know a lot of people who love that stuff and that's cool for them. But as a term it sums up pretty much any kind of music with emotion now, and what kind of music doesn't have emotion. It's like the word 'metal' can sum up so many kinds of music, but basically anything that is heavy can be considered metal. It's the same way with emo. I think all the emo bands' songs sound so generic. I once played with Sunny Day Real Estate when I was in a band in Portland and I remember thinking they were really good, but I thought all their songs sounded exactly the same. At the end

of the day I don't care what people say we sound like. I hope they like us, and if they think we're emo than so be it. But, all I'm saying is that I'm not writing from an emo perspective as that whole sound was after my time, it was subsequent to my musical upbringing.

Okay, why and how did you end up recording the first record at the studio of Dave "the Snake" Sabo, of Skid Row fame?

First off, it was Dave's studio but he didn't do anything on the record. Brian McTernan recorded it. The connection is that Skid Row and Quicksand have a manager in common and Walter and Dave became friends.

What?

Yup, it's weird I know. Dave "the Snake" Sabo is undoubtedly one of the coolest, most down to earth guys we've met in the industry. He is so cool and he's had all this success and he just has things in perspective more than most people. His studio was on the basement floor of his house and we weren't allowed upstairs because it was his house up there. He came down maybe the second or third day of recording and we totally hit it off. He barbequed for us one night and he took us through the house. He showed us his guitar collection and his framed pictures of him with Jon Bon Jovi and Alice Cooper. While I was doing vocals for that record, James and Will would go out with him and his buddies to play pool. But, his buddies weren't all rockstar buddies, they were his friends from high school. So we used his studio. It has like a 2-inch tape analog studio that has a 24-track or something, and it worked out really well.

He wasn't the guy with the obnoxious chain from his nose to his ear, was he?

Nope, that was Rachel Bolan.

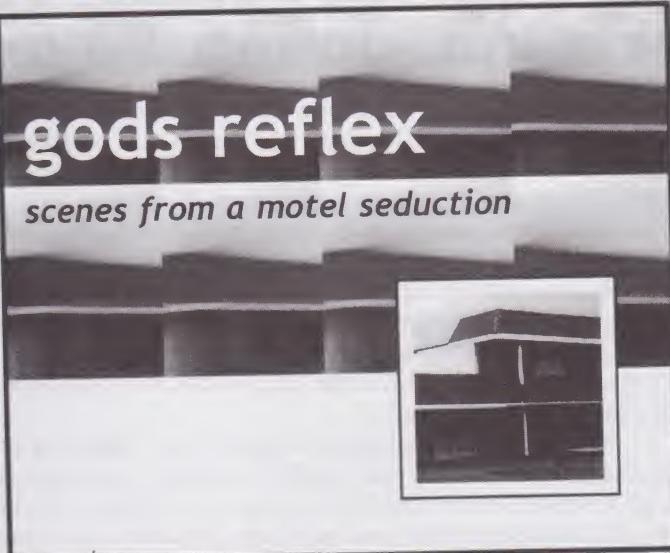
Yes, you're right! I take it he hasn't blown all his money on coke or something like that?

No, actually that was one of the things we were cracking up about. He was a sensible guy. You can tell from having conversations with him that he didn't come from money, so once he got there he wasn't about to fritter it away on babes or whatever. He had a nice house in the woods, but it wasn't out of this world. It was what you'd expect from a person who never had a nice house who wanted a nice house. Right now Skid Row is touring with a different singer-- none of them talk to Sebastian Bach anymore-- I think they're opening for Kiss. He was a guy that was super kind to us and we will always be grateful.

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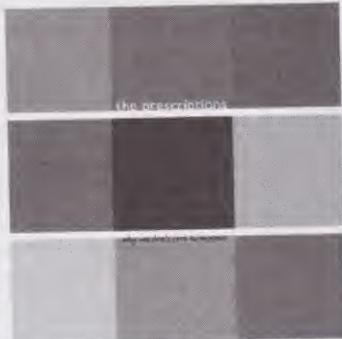
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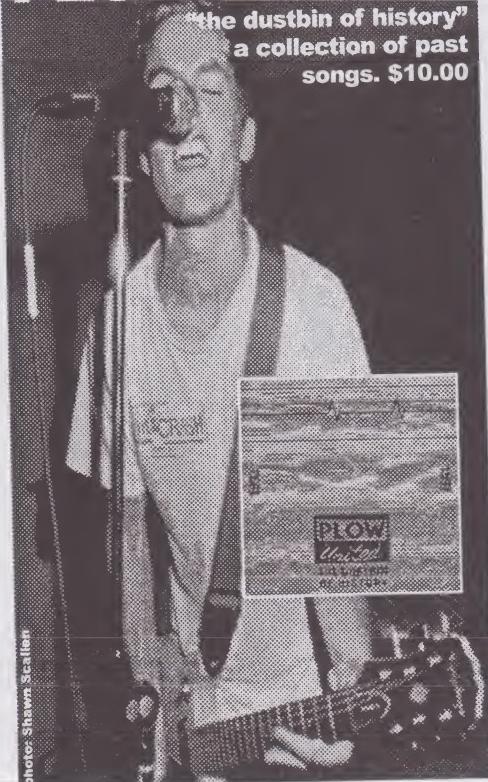


photo: Shawn Scallan

emusic

The Whatever Dudes

by DJ Whatever a.k.a. Jonah Bayer

It all started as a joke. My friend Nick and I started freestyle rapping in the car on long trips or when we got bored. I think the first time it happened was when Nick and I were driving back home with our friend Sarah from a gig my band had just played in Rochester. It was fun and seemed to pass the time. Basically we'd just find a beat on the radio and try to think of words that rhymed as fast as we could over the music. We were no Wu-Tang, but we definitely developed our own "style" (if you can call it that).

One day Nick was over at my apartment and we decided to do some rhyming and record it on my four track due to sheer boredom. I hooked up my keyboard to the preset "West Coast" beats and we just let it flow. We had a great time and it was pretty hilarious, but aside from that I didn't really think much of it. Nick, on the other hand started playing it for all of his friends and people seemed to really be into our "unique" attempts at freestyling. Our main problem was that we weren't very good. I can't count how many times we rhymed "house" with "mouse" in our early sessions. However this didn't seem to matter, and the enthusiasm towards our group escalated. Me and Nick continued to do

more sessions and record them with our friends guest rhyming. The only rule that we had was that the person who freestyled with couldn't be very good, because they would ruin our vibe. The beauty of our music was that no one really needed any talent or experience to participate: hey we were still punk rock at heart. It seemed like every time I saw Nick driving, his windows were rolled down and he was blasting our freestyle from the previous night, singing along word for word. It was his enthusiasm that kept me interested in the group. What we needed next was a name. A few words that could encompass our message and ideology for all others to understand. We finally decided on the "Whatever Dudes." I would be DJ Whatever and Nick would be MC Whatever but the names didn't really matter, it was the rhymes that were important.

When Nick told me we had our first gig at SUNY Potsdam my initial response was "What the hell are you thinking?" To be honest, I wasn't sure what to expect. I was pretty sure we could rhyme in front of an audience. I was more concerned if the punk community was ready for the Whatever Dudes. I'd read about the horror stories Atom and His Package experienced when he was starting out, and he was actually semi-talented! I knew that our friends all thought we were funny, but how would complete strangers react to the Whatever Dudes? I wasn't sure if the crowd like us or want to beat us up. We decided to bring our friend Jay along for company and also to document the experience, and on a snowy Friday we arrived at the show where a few other punk bands had already played. To be honest, I wasn't sure we would make it there alive since we drove four hours in a snow storm with no windshield wipers. Jay caught 6 or 7 car accidents on video on the way to show, including one car completely flipped over on its side. When we got there, a pretty big crowd had already gathered, and I can't imagine what they must of thought when two white kids who didn't look like rappers (I was wearing a Piebald shirt) hit the stage armed with a solitary keyboard. Actually Nick probably looked stranger than I did, since we was wearing a giant clock around his neck with numbers scattered all over it and the word "whatever" printed across it in huge letters. Thankfully, as soon as I hit the first beat I knew everything was going to be OK. The crowd went crazy, and whenever we put the mic into the crowd they would shout the lyrics back. It was a better response than I have gotten in any punk or hardcore band I've ever been in. There were even people dancing during our set, and we even pulled someone out of the crowd to freestyle with us. They loved us, women threw themselves at our feet, and more importantly we managed to rhyme "Potsdam" with "pots and pans" at least ten times. After the show the promoter asked if we would be interested in MCing a show with Bob Dylan and George Clinton. Although the response was pretty overwhelming, the thought of MCing a George Clinton show was quite intimidating and I didn't know exactly what it would entail. Of course me and Nick eagerly agreed. Who would have thought that after all of the bands I'd played in; some of which were pretty damn good, that this faux rap group would gain the most notoriety?

We didn't have much time to dwell on our newfound success before we were escorted to the post show party where people were singing the lyrics to our crowd favorite "Get a Whore." This song, probably our "biggest hit," outlines what else you can do with a whore besides having sex. Some examples include playing chess, playing in the sandbox, Nintendo, and other creative suggestions, all based to a preset keyboard patch which sounds suspiciously similar to Madonna's "Holiday." After lots of drinking and hanging out with some great kids we met, we headed back to Ithaca the next morning. During the long ride back to Ithaca we reflected on the show which may have been Me and Nick's greatest musical success to date.

During the next few months we had a lot of school work and Nick was

trying to graduate, so we had to put the Whatever Dudes on hold. We were still on hiatus when I got a call from the promoter asking if we would play the annual Potsdam "Goodfest," opening for the popular "jam" band, Moe. We were kind of bummed that Bob Dylan and George Clinton didn't seem to want us (and what a weird lineup that would have been) but we still decided to accept the gig. For those of you who aren't familiar with Moe, they play hippie rock in the vein of Phish and have a huge following. The promoter told us 10,000 tickets were going to be for sale for the show, how could we say no?

A few weeks went by and our excitement gradually increased. We actually only "practiced" once before the show because we wanted to keep it raw and real, Whatever Dudes style. We felt that part of our sound was due to the lack of preparation so we didn't want to jinx ourselves. Just because we didn't get together doesn't mean that we weren't in hip hop mode. On the long walk to and from campus I sharpened my freestyle skills and prepared for the inevitable success which awaited the Whatever Dudes.

By the day of the Moe gig we were well on our way to rap stardom. We hit the road with the official Whatever Dudes cameraman Jay and our trusty photographer Kathy. But, as soon as we got to the show things began to get very sketchy. We should have just turned around when we got a speeding ticket a half hour into the drive, but we had come too far already come hell or dirty hippies. In the car, me and Nick fantasized about how much we would get paid. We figured since 10,000 tickets we being sold at 20 bucks a pop there were definitely a few thousand in it for us. We saw a boat for sale on the side of the freeway on the way there, and daydreamed about how cool we would look in our new boat shooting our first music video. Our dreams where quickly shattered when Nick asked the promoter how much we were getting (we wanted to know if we were getting paid in hundred dollar bills or twenties) and he told us he "might be able to get us gas money." He made it very clear that there wasn't much money left in the budget. What budget? None of this money was coming out of his pocket, it was the school's money and they were trying to rip us off after we had just driven for five hours! To make matters worse, we were scheduled to play at 11:00 when all of the flyers said the doors opened at 12:00. We tried to keep a positive attitude and asked where our tent was, assuming we'd get to sample the gourmet foods that comes with any large music festival. However, instead of being welcomed into the bands-only tent, we were sent to a very sorry looking tent in the far corner of field. We were told food and drinks would be available in our tent, which actually was more of a tarp since it didn't have any walls to keep out the wind. Not only did our tent lack groupies and vegetarian dining, it was completely empty, aside from a few miserable looking drums of gasoline in the corner.

Of course the first thing we did was sneak into the "bands only" tent and began to eat Moe's pizza and drink the various beverages. Why should we sit there, cold as hell, sitting on gasoline tanks while the other bands dined like kings? Unfortunately, the less than courteous people running the show did not share our opinion, and we were kicked out of this tent on three separate occasions. Finally, it was time for our big break and aside from the disappointing start we were sure that once we hit the stage everyone would love us. Our damaged self-esteem begin to climb as we considered the inevitable amount of girls that would undoubtedly throw themselves at our feet. We ran up the stairs in true hip hop superstar fashion, to be greeted by 5 or 6 of Nick's friends and a sea of blue shirted security guards. We played a twenty minute set which was not our best performance but was still entertaining, and Nick's friends (and the security guards) seemed to enjoy us. We made sure to freestyle about how we ate Moe's pizza and how we weren't even getting paid for the show. I also made it a point to note the similarities between the "Goodfest" and the cinematic masterpiece known as "Goodburger" (Why do I always get made fun of for owning that movie?) For the finale we both ripped off our "Goodfest" tee shirts in protest. This was not the Potsdam crowd we knew and loved. This was not the hip-hop glory we had known only a few short months earlier when we rocked the crowd into a frenzy of debauchery and entertainment. Hell, we weren't even opening for a punk band...we were opening for Moe who suck!

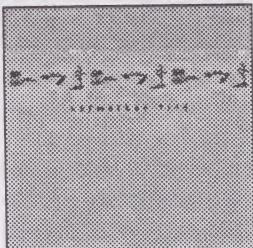
After the show the promoter came up to us and apologized about the lack of food in our decrepit old tent. I actually felt kind of bad, but we were still pissed that we weren't getting paid. We were even more pissed when we found out that another opening band had a 10,000 dollar guarantee while we were forced to steal their pizza,

but what could we do? Nick's friend Paul was more than nice and him and his girlfriend Dana took us all out to lunch which really helped us out. Unfortunately, we had still spent a considerable amount of money on gas and our previous speeding incident. We packed up the keyboard and all of the equipment and headed back home since both of our other bands had a show there that night. On the way back we got another speeding ticket which added to the general feelings of disappointment and frustration in the trip. Not that it was a complete failure, it just wasn't the big break that we had expected. Now that it's the summertime the Whatever Dudes have been put on hold once again. However we are currently trying to book a show in Compton since both me and Nick will be in LA in August. Try to catch us out there or watch the newstands for the new issue of *The Source* for more info on the hip hop revolution. The Whatever Dudes may be down, but we are not out.



photos by kathy

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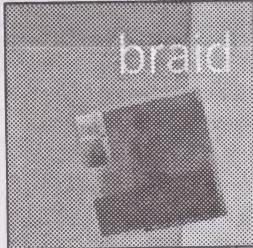


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Silent Majority

by Ross

To put it bluntly, Silent Majority is the kind of band that changes lives. I know that may sound stupid, especially coming from someone who only got into them relatively recently. I know a lot of people who claim this band changed what they thought about music, musical-intent, and hardcore. Combining some of the most deeply personal lyrics with some of the best melodic-hardcore you will ever hear, this band is truly a force to be reckoned with, and one that deserves far more recognition than they've gotten. Artie Shephard of Errortype:11, who produced Silent Majority's first record, actually told me these guys were playing more technical, complicated music when they were 17 than he's ever played in his whole life. I recently got a chance to talk with their singer, Tommy, about where his band is going and from where they've come. If this interview can serve as anything, I hope it will inspire you to run to the store and check out one of their incredible releases.

Okay, who do I have here?

Thomas Corrigan from the band Silent Majority.

What do you do when you're not playing music?

I work at a tattoo parlor.

Do you give tattoos?

No, I'm the front-man. I give people prices and stuff like that. I'm in the stage before apprentice.

Are you going to be an apprentice?

Yeah, I think so.

Anyways, onto band things. So, Silent Majority doesn't play too much since two of your band members are in college. Does it get hard to stay focused and interested?

It's not hard to stay focused--I'm definitely focused and so is the rest of the band. The drummer, Ben, and one of the guitarists, Ryan, are at school right now. There's always been an age gap in the band. Me and the other guitarist, Rich, are the same age and

when we went to college they were in high school. It was no big deal since we went to college locally. Then when we were done with college they were

going into college. They decided to go away, so we can only practice certain times and we can only go on tour during the summer or during breaks and stuff. But, back to your original question, it's more of a waiting thing, just waiting to be active in the band. We all come together and we're all focused when we are together.

When the two people that are in school graduate what are your plans?

Well, we've got to finish writing a new album first, and then tour and destroy. I would love to be a full time band. You can only do that once and now's the time. It's the only way to get to see the world.

You guys have been together forever, right?

Yeah, me and Rich have been playing together since we were 16 and I'm 25 now. Ryan was 12 when we started and now he's 22. We all grew up so close to each other that you could hit each other's houses with rocks.

I read something somewhere saying that Rich and Ryan



met because Rich babysat Ryan after school. Is that true?

Yeah, that's true. We were just the neighborhood kids. When Rich babysat Ryan everyone on our street would hang out. Ryan wasn't in diapers or anything. Rich would just make sure Ryan wouldn't kill himself in the stuff we did after school. But, since we had all known each other a while the age gap wasn't really considered. It was more like "you like hardcore, I like hardcore; let's start a band."

So, you guys just had a new release out on Initial and I assume your new record will be on Initial as well. How was the switch?
Well, we got down with Exit and Wreck-age through all the bands we grew up with like Mind Over Matter and stuff like that. We met the Initial guys through playing in Louisville and playing with the Enkindels. I don't know, it just worked out to be more like a step ahead. Initially there was a little tension with the Wreck-age thing. They were a bit upset that we left but that's all squared away now. We're so happy with Initial. I feel like I owe them more than I can give them. I feel bad that we can't play more and tour for them. Naturally a record label wants their bands to play as much as they can, but they understand and they know we're headed in that direction.

I actually talked to Rich a few summers ago at the Wreck-age fest at Coney Island High in New York and he told me that he thought the Long Island scene was the best in the country. Do you still feel that way?

No. It used to be really good. A lot of people fell out of it. At one point it was really great: the biggest clubs were run by kids and there were tons of bands. Now it's like a whole new crop of kids. It's like seedlings of kids that are waiting to grow into a forest.

But a few bands like the Glassjaw or the Movielife are getting really big, right?

Oh yeah, totally. We've known them since

they were little kids.

From what I gather the Long Island scene is really incestuous. Your band is too right?

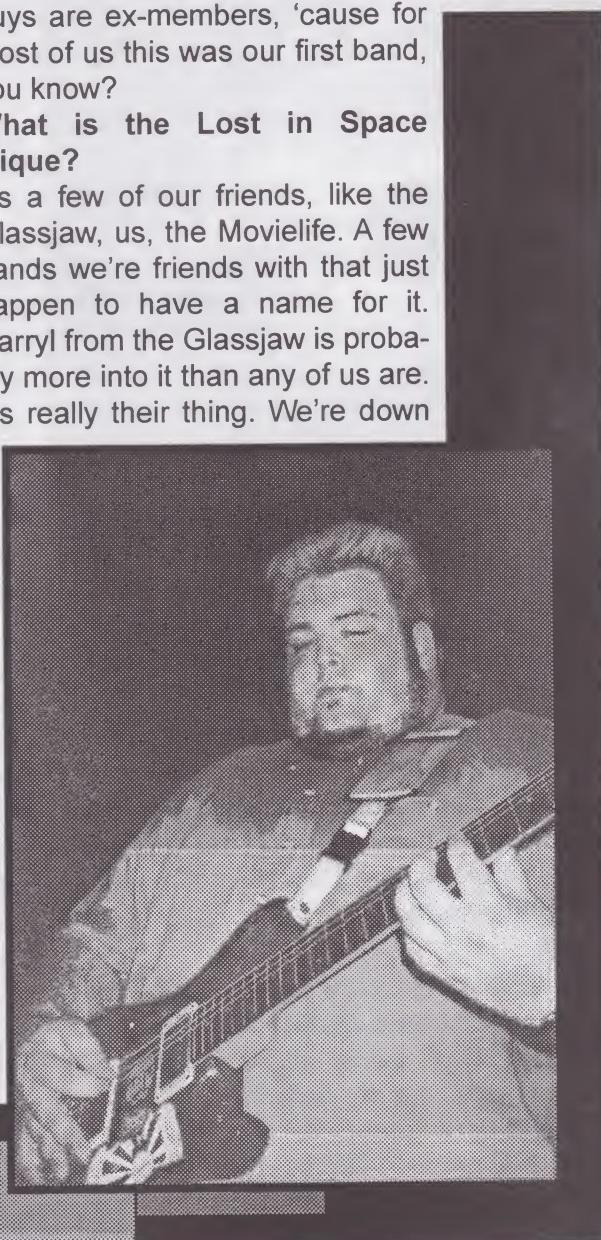
Yeah, Darryl from the Glassjaw played bass for us, Scott who was in Errortype:11 and Mind Over Matter used to play for us, and our bassist, Ben, used to be in the Movielife. I was in a band with the guys from Tripface. We had the bassist from Tension playing for us for a while. I mean, most of us have known each other since we were 15—the older kids at least. I don't know, it's just a bunch of friends who all happen to be good at playing hardcore.

The guys in Silent Majority really learned to play right in front of each other's eyes.

Yeah totally. I love it that way. It's my first love. I built this thing, you can't say the Silent Majority guys are ex-members, 'cause for most of us this was our first band, you know?

What is the Lost in Space clique?

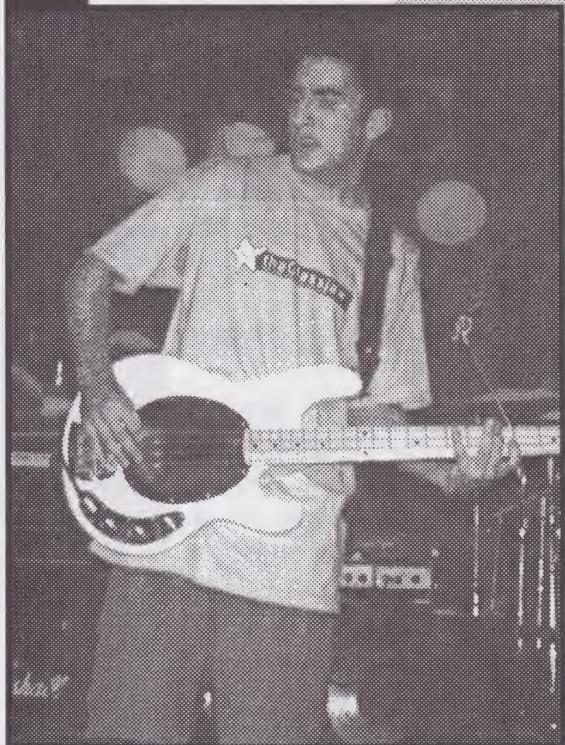
It's a few of our friends, like the Glassjaw, us, the Movielife. A few bands we're friends with that just happen to have a name for it. Darryl from the Glassjaw is probably more into it than any of us are. It's really their thing. We're down



with it, but it's just funny.

More than any other band that I listen to on a regular basis, your lyrics are really really personal. I'm not talking about poetic lyrics where no one knows what exactly what you're talking about....

No, I give it to you straight. I say it



the way it is. I think it's too easy to hide things. I try not to talk my way around things. If you would guess I'm a big fan of the insert. I really like the idea that kids can read my lyrics on the insert and know what I'm saying and maybe relate to what I talk about when I sing about my life. I like the idea that you can have my lyrics without the music and it's still relevant. Not like a band like Bush or something where you have no idea what the guy's talking about.

You write about your family a lot. Does that ever become a source of tension?
No, they don't know about it. Well, my sister knows, but my parents don't know.

Really?!

My dad's never seen my band play and my mom has once.

Is that a conscious effort to write about your life?

When I wrote those songs those were the things that were on my mind. I'm not bitter about my parents, I love them, but I just deal with them in that way. I write about my dad and his drinking a lot. It's not that he's an asshole, it's just that when he drinks he's an asshole. And then when I write about my sister, it's just what's on my mind at that time. As I say in "No I'm Not" off "Life of a Spectator" [SM's first full length] music is my therapy. When I get up there on stage and sing my head off it's therapeutic for me and helps me deal with everything going on in my life. I wrote that song when I was about 20 or 21. My mom told me I should come to these therapy meetings with her. I told her that I didn't need that, 'cause I do that shit every week. I deal with it my way, and I think a lot of the kids in hardcore do the same thing. However, if you look at the new stuff, you can see that I'm over that. I'm onto other subjects in the new songs.

Well, even your older stuff is very personal as well, like songs about being straight-edge and stuff.

As I said, it's basically what I'm going through at that particular time.

Are the other guys in the band cool about your lyrics?

Yeah, they're totally much cooler than I would expect them to be. A lot of the songs are really anti-drinking or anti-drugs, and I think only two people in the band actually

are straight-edge. I don't tell them how to play their parts, and I do my thing. I could go a lot crazier with my lyrics but I think this is enough. I just feel that if you write about a girl-related situation you end up being a bad guy later on, especially if you're with a new girl later on down the road. Or, if you write a song about some girl and a year later you could care less about that situation it becomes a drag.

Do kids ever come up to you on the street and tell you your lyrics really helped them through a hard time?

Yeah, sometimes. That's the shit right there, that's the best thing. It's why I do it. Every time something like that happens you just can't beat it. Even if one kid ever said that to me I'd be so happy. Being able to touch somebody and make them think.

Is Artie going to produce your next record?

Well, he didn't produce the EP since he was away with Error-type:11, but I'd love to have him produce the next record. He really pushed me a lot. He made us all do more takes on things we normally would have just left alone. He made me think about how the music sounded a bit more. We never had anyone produce our stuff before so I think the stuff he helped us with sounded so much more focused. And it's great since if it weren't for people like him and his work in Mind Over Matter we wouldn't be playing today.

Silent Majority can be reached at .
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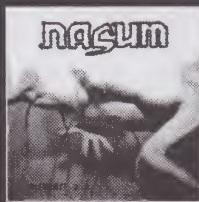
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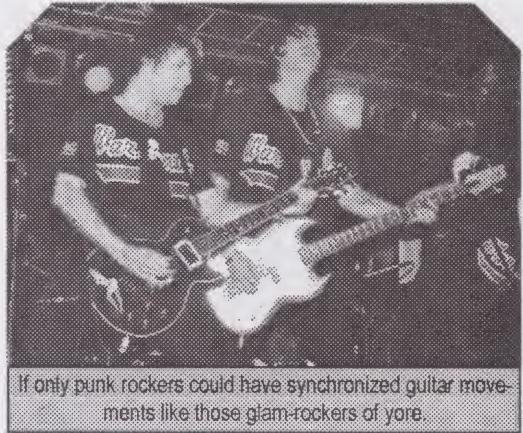
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My Trip To The
Warrant
Show

DEPT. 111

(LOI-55)



If only punk rockers could have synchronized guitar movements like those glam-rockers of yore.



Jani Lane: the man, the myth, the rosy-faced, double-chinned rocker knows how to control a crowd!



Some toe-tapping, slam-dancing, kiss-your-girl/boyfriend singalongs. Check out the sparkly bass.

It was drawing near the end of my senior year in college, which will be over by the time anyone reads this. I was sitting in my college's arts quad enjoying a Gatorade, when a dear friend of mine ran up to me and started babbling unintelligibly at a mile a minute. "Slow down, calm yourself," I said. "I can't," he blurted, "Warrant's coming to play here in Ithaca!" I suddenly got a strange look on my face and considered the possibility of whether or not one of the greatest glam-metal bands of all time-- the band that crooned such hits as "Heaven," "Sometimes She Cries," "Down Boys," "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "I Saw Red," and, yes, "Cherry Pie"-- would ever come to a school more obsessed with soft strumming of Dave Matthews than the monster ballads of Warrant. My friend saw the look of disbelief on my face and yelled, "I'm serious! They're coming to some fraternity house this Thursday!" I replied by telling him that I had no time for friends teasing me with the prospect of one of my favorite bands circa age 12 coming to school. He left, but not before 3 other kids ran up to tell me the same thing. It still could have been just a rumor. But, we decided to test the strength of hearsay come Thursday at a frat house near the dorm I lived in my freshman year, and we were greeted with one of the most insane spectacles I've seen in a long time.

We entered the house walking past girls and boys reeking of beer and cigarettes, paid the \$12 entry fee, and headed into the backyard. There, we found a full wet bar, a stage, many many cops, and about 300 inebriated 20-somethings. I knew we were in for a treat.

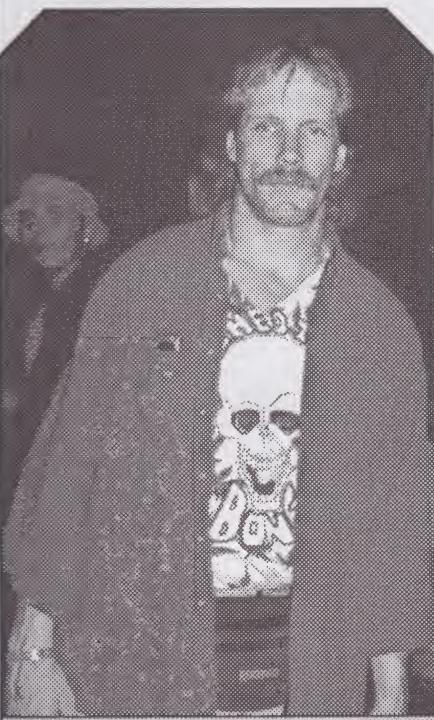
I instantly whipped out my camera and began snapping pictures of the crowd. I'm sure most of the people I talked to and photographed were far younger than myself when Warrant rocked on MTV, as opposed to now where they rock frat houses. For those kids Warrant must be a gleaming memory in the back of their pop culture memories.

Many of them were dressed to the nines as any self-respecting sorority girl should be. But, there was a very eclectic mix of kids there as well. Of course, there were the people who looked like they were born and bred for glam metal shows. But, punk rockers, football players, hippies, and frat boys all waited side by side for the heroes of the night to come out. It was quite a sight. Most everyone was drunk, with the exception of my friends and I, who wanted to take in everything that would go on that night and commit it to memory for stories to tell our grandkids.

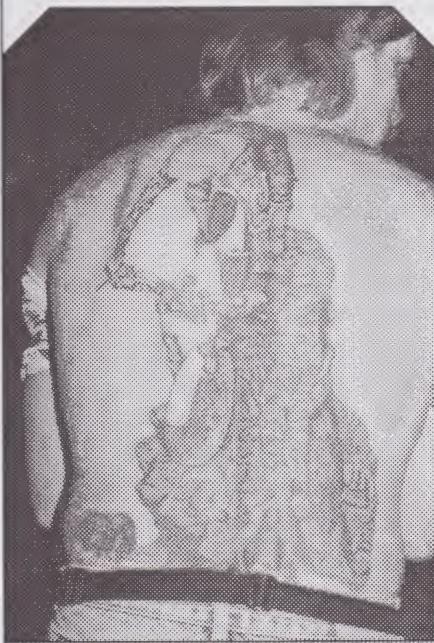
We didn't have to wait long, though, for about a half an hour after we arrived the Down Boys themselves took the stage. At first glance, they were a little bit fatter, a little bit rosier, and a lot disappointing. Plus, what happened to the long hairsprayed hair they used to have? In fact, their drummer looked like he could have been

by ROSS

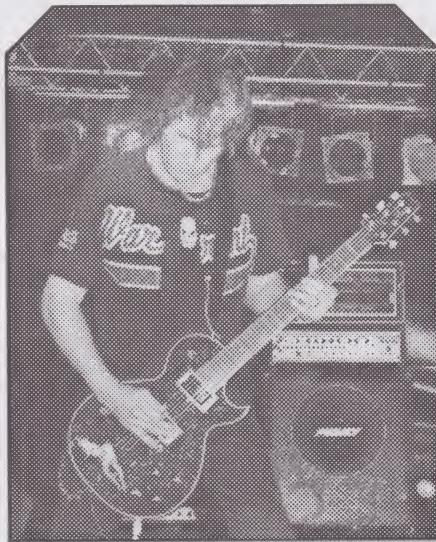
WARRANT
The Warrant show



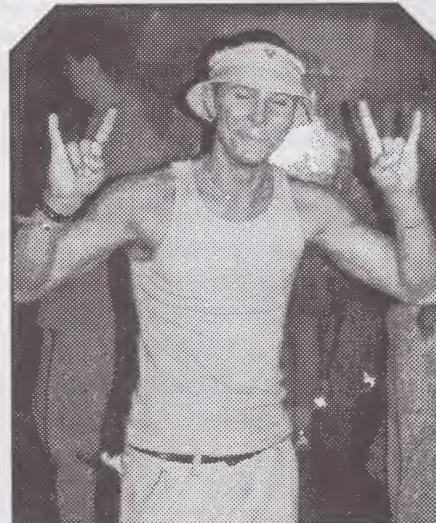
Believe it or not, this guy was probably the most hessian-looking guy at the show. Notice the fannie-pack.



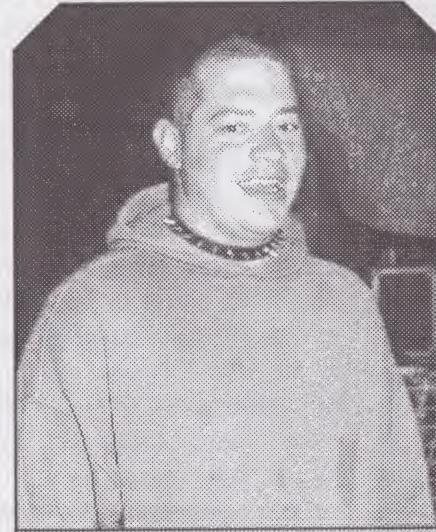
After the first picture, the guy promised me he'd show me something cool. Um, what do you think?



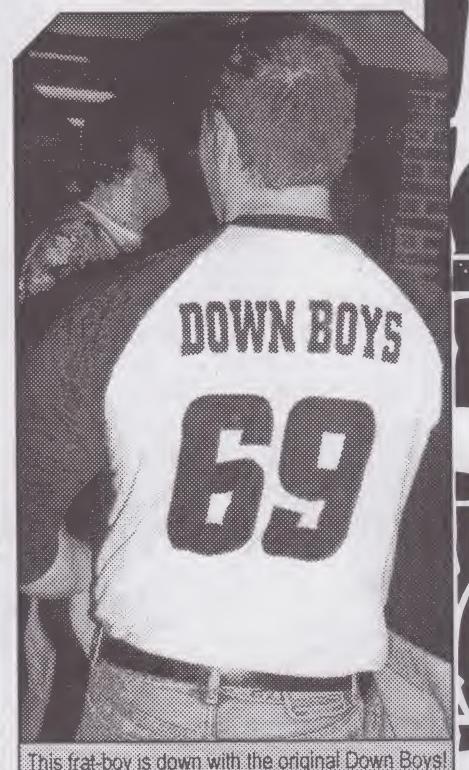
Where would hardcore be without the metal solo?



Tank tops are so glam rock. What's with the weird hat he's wearing?



Even the punk rockers came to see Warrant! And, judging by the smile on this young upstart's face, I'd say he was more than satisfied.

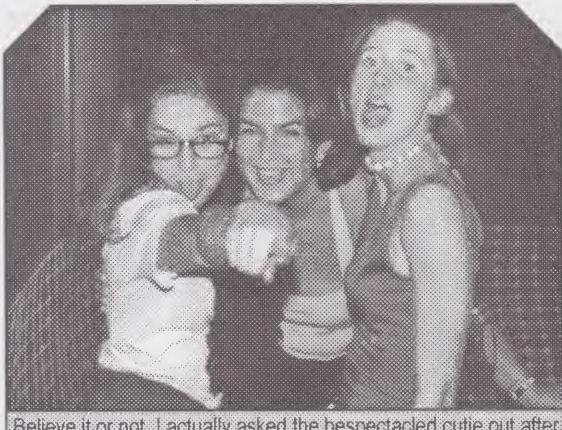


This frat-boy is down with the original Down Boys!



All the chicks go crazy over guys in leather. You can almost hear this enthusiastic fan singing along to "Uncle Tom's Cabin".





Believe it or not, I actually asked the bespectacled cutie out after the picture was taken. She then threw up on my shoes.



I don't think this dude's boxer shorts match with his Warrant tank top. But, I think two of the many cops at the show didn't mind a bit.



It's amazing what two girls will do when you point a camera in their direction.



After the picture was taken, the girl on the right asked me if I wanted her to flash me. I responded simply: "yes, yes I do."



LOI's editor pumps his fists in glam rock glory!

because of my trip to the
Warrant show.

a post-haircut Rikki Rachman! However, as they picked up their instruments and began to rock the crowd into one of the most ferocious mosh-pits I've ever seen, my skepticism quickly disappeared. The band was dressed in Doc Martens, pleather pants, and Warrant baseball shirts, and it was as if glam-rock had never fallen out of the public's taste of the moment. The crowd loved it, the band seemed to think it was amazing, even the cops looked like they were having a good time. Almost every kid in the place screamed along to the monster chorus of "Heaven," while the rest cheered, snapped pictures, and held their lighters in the air. I even caught one of the personalized pics their guitarist threw into the crowd!

Okay, let's face it. There's really nothing amazing about glam-rock. The music is silly and obsessed with sex, and the fashion was always more of an embarrassment than it was stylish. What really held my interest during the hour long set was my nostalgia. I used to sit in front of the television, pretending my dad's tennis racket was a guitar, and scream along to Warrant at 13 years old, and here I was seeing them live 9 years later! They were really one of my first tastes of rock music, cheesy as it may seem. But hey no one is punk from birth. What also amazed me was that this band, that most definitely played stadiums opening up for Aerosmith or Motley Crue, were still rocking the house while their contemporaries had passed on to bad rap/rock combos. Sure, this was a step down from the Whiskey a GoGo in LA, and maybe they didn't have big-breasted groupies anymore. But, these 300 kids had a wonderful time and probably danced with more enthusiasm than most bands can dream of a decade after the apex of the career. It made me feel good that my friends struggling their asses off right now to make their bands work could possibly go strong for 10 plus years. Sure, the guys in Warrant were a bit fatter. Sure, they made the major faux pas of covering Lit and Harvey Danger songs. Sure, the excitement may have had something to do with the beer running down my school mates' throats. Nonetheless, I had a wonderful time and I know that I will remember those last few weeks of my college career for the rest of my life... partly

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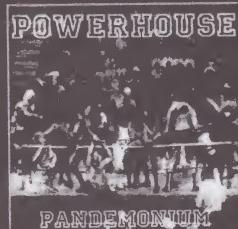
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Berzerk



(LOI-61)

So what happened to you at the show you played the other day?

Okay, so my friend Gilbert had this guy messing with him. I'm telling them to leave 'cause the security guards said, "no way can there be a fight, 'cause then the show has to be shut down." And I was afraid there would be a huge brawl or something. So, I'm telling them to leave and I've got them in a really tight hug trying to keep them off each other. And then the guy's sister comes and starts yelling at me telling me I'm a bitch and blah blah blah.

Gotta watch out for those sisters.

So, I'm trying to get them to leave and I'm kind of pushing them. And the sister is yelling her head off at me. I kept chasing them around until they would leave.

And did they finally leave?

Yeah.

Do there tend to be a lot of fights in the Portland scene?

Lately yeah, it's been bad lately. For the past year there have been a lot of fights. It's weird, though, because it's basically between the same two people. So, it's not that bad. It has nothing to do with the scene, it just has to do with two people who barely see each other but happen to see each other at our shows, so fights are always breaking out between them when we play here.

So why aren't people like, "dude, don't go to shows anymore or you'll be sorry"?

That's what I told them, that's what I say whenever they come. I could care less who fights. You can go to 7-11 and meet each other at 7 o'clock and beat the shit out of each other but you don't do it at my shows.

Is the Portland scene pretty cool otherwise?

Yes, but if you play local shows here you're going to get 100 kids tops. No one goes to shows here. They act like they're really sur-

Berzerk is a band I stumbled upon relatively recently, and I have to wonder where they are now. This Portland, OR hardcore band plays with more guts and aggression than most bands even dare. Using fast as hell drum beats and screaming that will make you cower, Berzerk reminds me of a time in my life when hardcore was fun and I wasn't as



were when we were compiling our "women in punk" issue. This Portland, OR hardcore band plays with more guts and aggression than most bands even dare. Using fast as hell drum beats and screaming that will make you cower, Berzerk reminds me of a time in my life when hardcore was fun and I wasn't as

prised and get really into it when they do go out. The other day we played a show with a band called Backside Disaster, they're a metal hardcore band and they're local too. Honestly we're both the biggest bands in Portland. So we drew in about 300 people which is totally weird. You don't get 300 kids at a local show and we did it. I think it's getting better, and there's the proof. Otherwise, when pretty big hardcore bands come around that aren't from Oregon, that's where you're going to get the draw. If a band like AFI came there would be around 600 kids. There aren't too many punk kids, but there are a ton of straight edge and hardcore kids.

Are you guys straight?

Not at all. (laughter)

It's funny 'cause if your band played out here on the east coast you would totally fit alongside the other hardcore bands rather than other punk bands as pop-punk really dominates the punk scene out West.

Yeah, and the straightedge kids really don't come out to our shows. But, that's changing right now in the past few weeks they're starting to check us out. I think it's 'cause we played with Backside Disaster and they're straightedge so the hardcore kids are starting to take notice.

How old are you guys?

All of us are 20.

So what do you do other than play music?

I don't work, I just go to school full time. Mandy, the bass-

ist, goes to a university, while I go to a community college. Our drummer, Puff Chaddy, he works at the airport full time. Then we have Tyler, the guitar player. He takes these big machines to Safeway roofs and cleans roofs.

How did he get into that? (laughter)

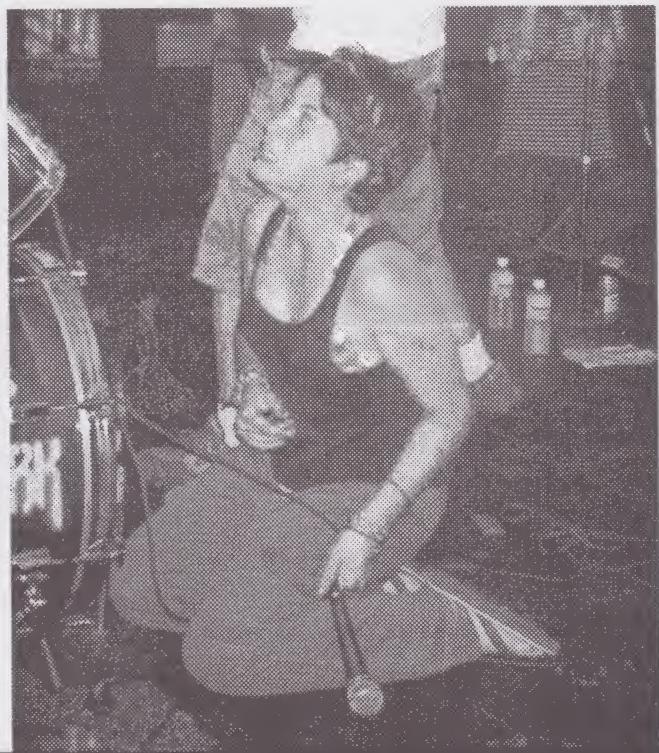
His friend got him into it 'cause he's an insomniac so he can't sleep. Then he goes to bed at like 7 in the morning. He tends to come to my window and open it and scare the shit out of me when he jumps into bed with me. It really sucks that he stinks of Safeway roofs and a 40.

Can you tell me a little bit about the history of the band?

Oh God, this is going to be so long. I was in another band called Half-wit when I was 15 and I played guitar and sang. Tyler played in that band too. We played and Mandy was there watching it and she told me she wanted to start a band. Half-wit was a grunge band. I was so shy back then.

Really? I think you're anything but shy, Joanne.

I was so shy but once I'd get up to the microphone I'd be a new person. I'm not shy at all on stage. So, she sees us



jaded. So, I was really excited when Recess Records contacted me about interviewing Berzerk. I recently sat down with their singer, Joanne, and talked about the history of Portland's biggest punk act, the Portland scene, and where this balls to the wall band will go in the future. Joanne is one of the most enthusiastic and easy going people I've met in a while. And, I'm sure that after reading this interview you too will want to find out about the burgeoning punk rock scene house in the Northwest, specifically bands like Berzerk.

play and she likes it. She played bass back then and she wanted us to leave Half-wit and start a band with her. So, we did. (laughter) We wanted to play fast stuff like FYP 'cause we were young, you see. Back then we were into stuff like Gorilla Biscuits, AFI, FYP... the good stuff. So that turned into Berzerk.

Yeah, but I think you sound way more like Gorilla Biscuits than FYP any day.

Oh yeah I agree. You should have heard our first demo tape we made when we were 16. It was horrible! It was the worst. It sounds like really screechy out of tune music with really fast beats.

Like FYP.

Yeah, like FYP. I sounded worse than Todd from FYP. I sounded like a baby that came out of his butt or something. So all this drama went down. People left the band or were replaced. You know, the usual. We were always breaking up and

getting back together. At some point throughout these years everyone in Berzerk ended up liking each other. Male-female, female-female, we all ended up liking one another. We were out of control. So, then I started listening to Integrity and Earth Crisis and then the next thing you know I was all about Texas is the Reason. All the Revelation and Victory stuff I loved. I ended up turning into a fucking bitch. Honestly, this is my fault. I was a bitch! I quit the band 'cause I was young and stupid. Tyler was doing acid and for some reason that totally bothered me. So, Berzerk wasn't together for about a year. We didn't really speak for that time and I changed a lot for the better. Enough people fucked me over to have me

start going back to my normal self. Tyler is jamming with a lot of people and he wants to start Berzerk again. So, he finds the best drummer in the world, Puff Chaddy, and they start playing old Berzerk songs. So, Tyler asked me and Mandy to play with him again and finally we gave in and decided to give it another go. We came back with a more developed sound and we were way more professional. From there it's been the real Berzerk. So, we put out a 7" that did really well and we recently put out a full length.

How did you guys get hooked up with Recess, 'cause it seems that you have a totally different sound than most Recess bands.

Yeah, it's weird. When we were about 15 we played with FYP and they liked us. So we kept in contact with them. And, every time they would come back we'd play with them again. So, one night in Olympia Todd told us he was thinking about putting out a 7" with us. And we were young so we

were shitting bricks with excitement. We recorded and sent it to him and they liked it. Over time we've become really good friends with the Recess crew. We're their first hardcore band. They love us so much.

Okay, let's talk about the band-member nicknames listed on the insert. We've got you, "Joanne Spice," "Tyler Massacre," "Amanda Morgasm," "Ben Buttmaster," and "Puff Chaddy." Where did you come up with those?

Well, first off, I'm not Joanne Spice and Ben isn't even in the band anymore. Amanda Morgasm is her name, it's her Berzerk name. No one calls her that, but we do. I have no idea where the Spice at the end of my name came from. I think one day someone called me that and it was just thrown in along with the rest of the nicknames. I'm starting to call myself the Greek Grenade, because I'm Greek. Tyler came up with his name himself. And, Puff Chaddy is basically his real name. Everyone, even outside of our band, refers to him as Puff Chaddy 'cause he smokes the weed like no other. Everyone's name is really just a joke other than Puff Chaddy's.

Okay, Joanne, what bands would you love to tour with that you haven't already?

Oh God, totally Coalesce or Boy Sets Fire. I love those bands and I hope Coalesce gets back together. Avail too, Slayer, Bon Jovi. We've played with so many good bands already, though, like Death By Stereo, AFI, FYP. We love those bands!

Joanne, what would you do if you were rich and

famous that you can't do now?

So much stuff, probably, although I don't need to be rich to be happy. I'd open up a good punk record store, which I'm actually working on now. But, I would be able to completely pay for it if I were rich. (laughter) I would get us some good equipment 'cause we have the shittiest stuff. I'd open up a recording studio for kids to make good records for not too much money. And, I'd probably be really beautiful and get my hair done all the time and get lots of nice lip gloss.

Yeah, I always thought punk was about having lots of good lip gloss tool (laughter)

The sad part is that it's sometimes true!

Photos by Hal

Berzerk can be reached @ www.sxe-berzerker.friendpages.com



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Tim Holden is hidden under your mattress

Dear Rock N'Roll Forum,

I never thought I'd be writing to you but I just had to share last weekend with everyone. I'm a young buck with broad shoulders, red hair and an abnormally large glove size. Last Saturday was one of those steamy summer nights and I was lining up to head down into the torrid depths of the Middle East downstairs in Boston. Sleater-Kinney was on the bill and I knew all the Saucony-clad honeys would be out for this one. The line was going nowhere, so I had time to scope 'em out one by one. There was too much eye candy for one man to handle. From the not-at-all-fitting ankle-length trousers to the campy tee shirts I was in hog heaven. As I let my macho gaze settle throughout the line I just knew I'd get it in return, and I did - in spades. One by one I saw the kittens bat their lusty lashes right back at me. I just knew my hot bod, slipped into cuffed indigo Levi's, could steam up every pair of black thick-rimmed glasses that dared to look at me. Never mind that they would scowl and instantly turn away. I knew they did that just because they were too embarrassed to show me their flushed, lust-worn faces.

By the way the girl at the door stamped my hand, I knew I was in for a good night. It's not any guy that gets his wrist grabbed: I was someone's love slave. Her grip was tight but with just the right amount of caressing kindness. With stamp in hand she knew I was more than just some back cover to a library book. No, sir. She held the stamp just long enough as if to say, "hey big boy, I see you're one burning hot stud, maybe a dab of black ink might cool you down". When she said "enjoy the show" I knew I'd have at least one lady waiting for me afterwards, but I had no plans on coming back up those stairs alone. Sorry baby, maybe next show.

I had my game plan set and the first stop was the bar. I had to laugh when I got there because all the ladies from outside acted as if they'd never seen me before. They were all playing along until one brave soul sashayed up and shook her head at me. She didn't speak as she walked passed, but she was thinking "you lookin' fine with that tight kelly green Lacoste shirt and classically messy mop-top hair". She wasn't worth following 'cause I had my sights on a foxy little chippy at the end of the bar. As I walked up I could feel her gaze penetrating my trousers (which were suddenly getting tighter). I sat down, leaned

Penthouse Forum. Ah, that takes me back. When I was eight I found my brother's copious stash of pornography. That's when I first learned about Forum. Back then my pre-pre-pubescent mind couldn't comprehend such colorful literature. To me their exploits were as mysterious as their names: F.T. from Bronxville, NY would wax poetic about "hammer-heading the salad bowl," while D.M. from Warren, P.A. couldn't get over the fact that it "felt just like being stuck in 98.6 degree pink aspic." What I did know was that these writers were men of action, people to be feared and admired.

Indeed I am a bit of a deviant and yes I have yearned to join the ranks of America's Sleaziness and submit a story but I never could. My threshold for putting so much bullshit into one column is only so high (remember fellas, nothing, repeat, *NOTHING* in Penthouse Forum has ever happened to a mortal man). For the past year or so, some stupid kid from San Franicsco offered to give me a page or two to be as clever and sleazy as I want in his magazine. Well my dear readers I believe it's due time that I present to you, Rock N Roll Forum. Thank you Ross, but instead of dredging up all the ills in the world I'll use this space to combine the world of the 20-something indie rock concert goer with that of a mustache and silk robe-wearing never never land of the Penthouse player. I'm sorry to say the following letter will not be as gory/sexy as the original Forum so I won't offend any delicate sensibilities. Enjoy, and may your love butter boil and sex juice sizzle.

over, and asked if she was thirsty. Like a hot, oily piston she shot up, then scurried off to the ladies room to no doubt cool her burning pains of sexual yearning. Just as I was going to drape my throbbing python (read: arm) over a worthy shoulder the band took the stage. All the hot sex action was on the floor, huddled together like so many horny yaks on a cold Tibetan morning. There were so many to choose from, the only question was who should be the first to be the object of my macking. A bunch of ladies were obviously baiting me by holding their long neck beer bottles close to their waiting mouths. But they'd have to take a back seat to the beauty standing by the stage.

She was tall, skinny and wearing a vintage Puma running top. The Bikini Kill patch on her backpack meant hot, and her Fugazi pin encouraged me 'cause I know how those guys like to party. The many hair clips in her short brown hair would sparkle like the disco ball in my van. But it was her slow, rhythmic head bobs that made my libido scream. Sure, the head bang of the metal chick is good, but the indie girl head bob is what really makes me want to bawl. Like a flamingo in a courtship dance she began to gyrate her serpentine, sweat-beaded neck. I thought that the girl next to her must have been

her sister, 'cause they were holding hands. Hell, a little girl-girl action never hurt anyone's love life. My only hope was that I could show her what she had been missing all these years.

As the band got more intense she began to put her shoul-

perfection. No matter how loud the band got her face remained indifferent. That bored indie girl look got me so hot I shot my wad.

Luckily the gum that shot out of my mouth didn't land in any one's hair and I was able to find a piece of paper and dispose of it properly before it was stepped on. After the set, I introduced myself and she returned by asking me to sponsor her in the March Against Homelessness. I knew this was just a ploy - she wanted me more than jerky needs its beef. She was just too shy to say so and jump my bones in the middle of the floor. I took her sponsor form and proceeded to write the most torrid sex charged poem that would fit in a 3 inch long "Address Here" box. She looked at me with in astonish-

ment. "No," was her simple reply as she smiled naughtily and laughed, hard. This was of course due to the nervous energy quivering through her body. The thought of a burning hunk of indie swinger was just too much to handle. After she slapped my face and walked away I knew my job there was done. I never thought I would ever have this overwhelming effect on so many ladies at one time. But sadly I am too much for a mortal woman to handle.

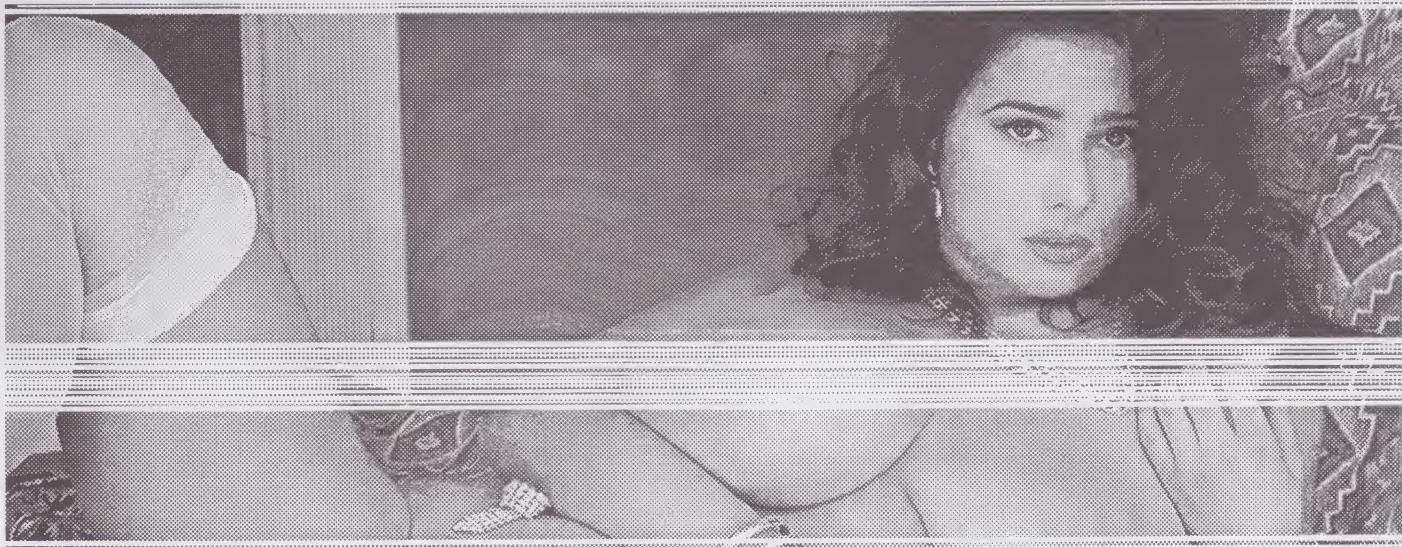
T.H.

Rye Brook, N.Y.

"Just as I was going to drape my throbbing python (read: arm) over a worthy shoulder the band took the stage. All the hot sex action was on the floor, huddled together like so many horny yaks on a cold Tibetan morning."

ders into it. Back and forth, back and forth. It looked like she was involved in a vertical carnal embrace with an imaginary lover. Seeing an open spot on the floor I fished some gum from my courier bag, peeled off my cardigan and headed in.

I joined in her filthy dance of lust right away. Back and forth, back and forth, faster, harder, again and again. Never mind that everyone else was dancing too, we might as well have been the only ones in the room. Close up I could see her face was the picture of bemused



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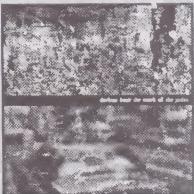
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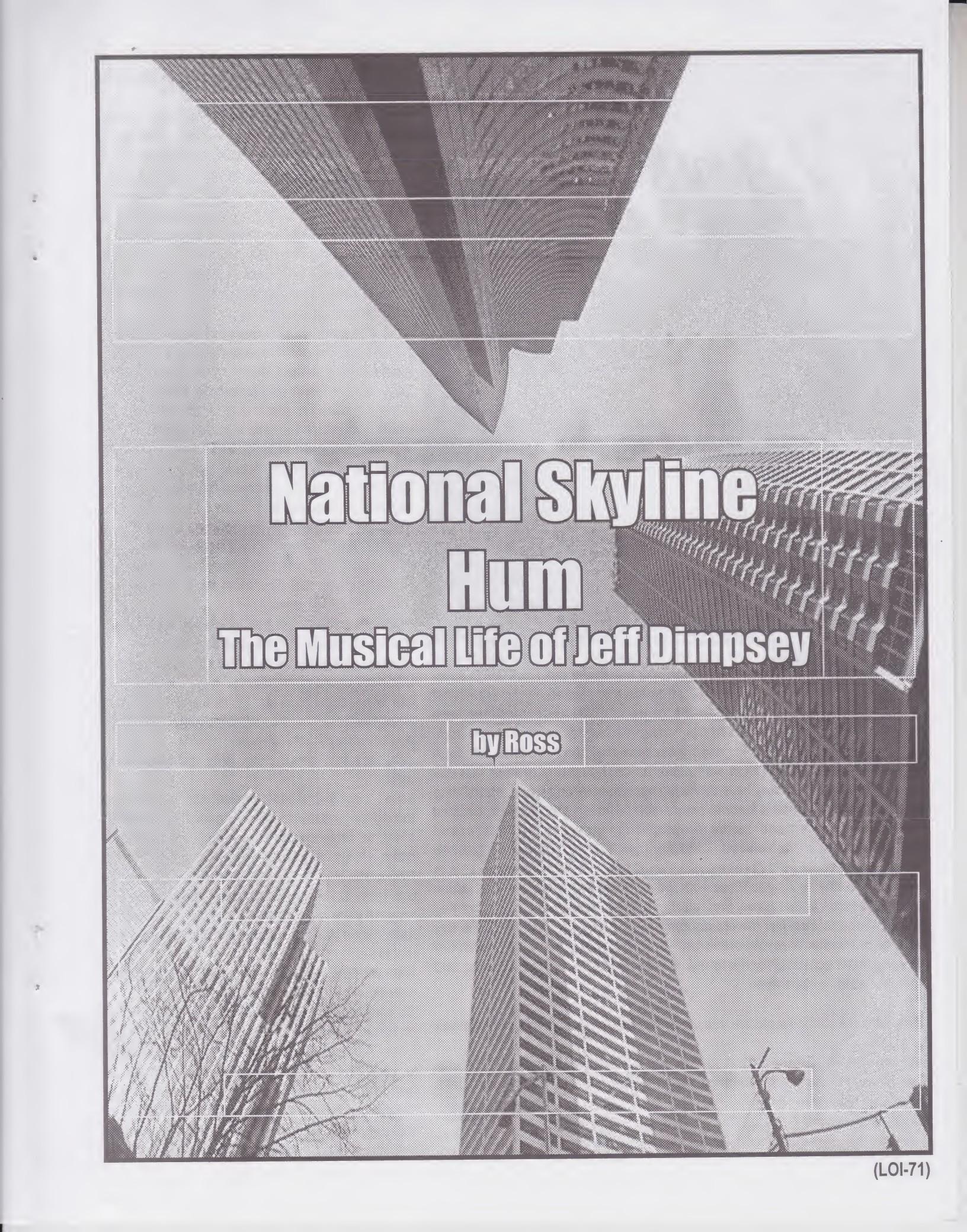
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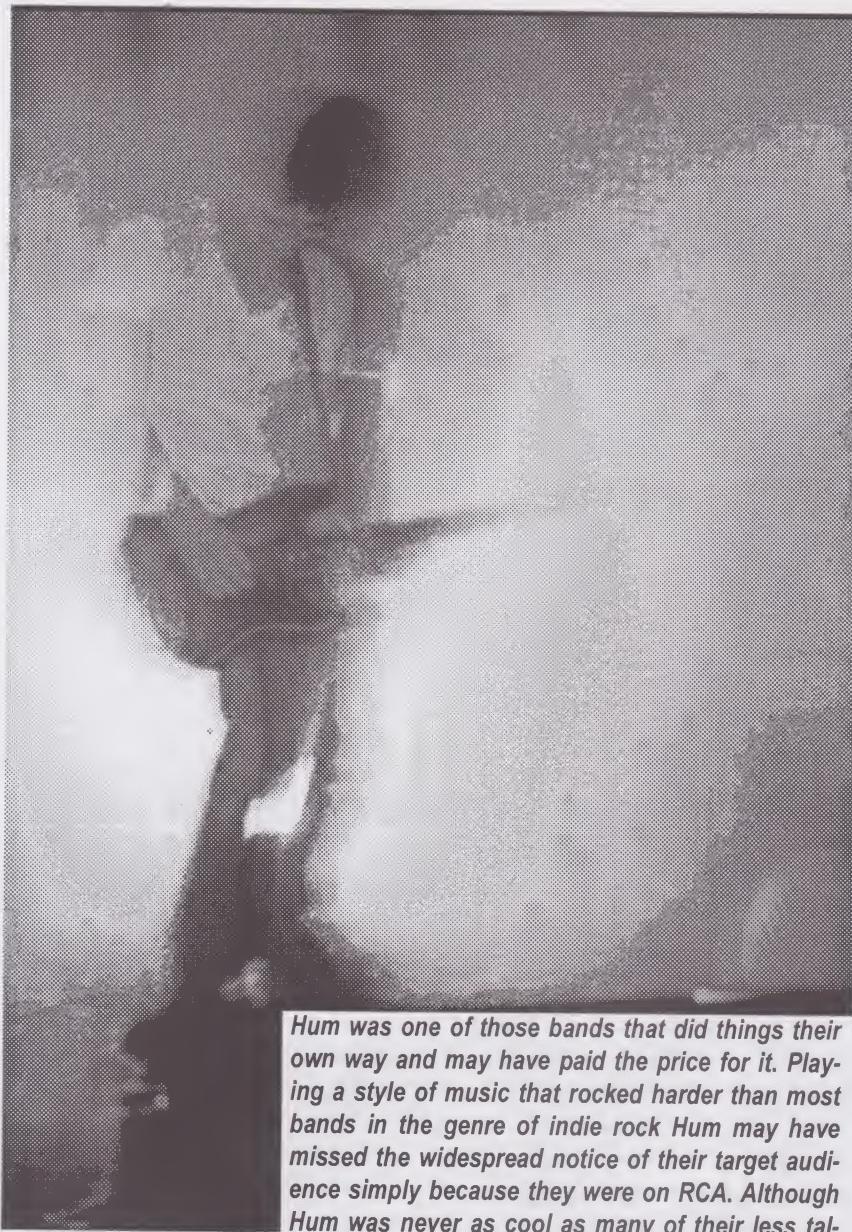


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National Skyline Hum The Musical Life of Jeff Dimpsey

by Ross



Hum was one of those bands that did things their own way and may have paid the price for it. Playing a style of music that rocked harder than most bands in the genre of indie rock Hum may have missed the widespread notice of their target audience simply because they were on RCA. Although

Hum was never as cool as many of their less talented contemporaries, they have suddenly become very important, often being cited as many a rockstar's favorite bands. Jeff Dimpsey, their bassist, decided to give music one last shot before throwing in the towel and therefore formed National Skyline, a "half-electronic, half-organic" band, as he puts it. While the two bands come from the same place musically, they still have very little in common soundwise. As you'll see from the review of their recent EP on Hidden Agenda Records in this issue, their stuff is brilliant in every way. So, I jumped at the chance to interview the mastermind behind this great band, and a key member of another of my favorites. Jeff was nice enough to take time out of his busy finals schedule for me to talk about his bands, past and present, and where he wants to take them.

Okay, who are you, how old are you, and what would you be doing if it weren't for music?

Let's see, I'm Jeff Dimpsey, I'm thirty-two, and if I wasn't doing music I'd do unix system administration, which I'm about to start doing. I wouldn't have known that a few years ago but now I know it.

Why do you say that?

'Cause up until a year ago music was all I did.

So what led to the sudden interest in computer science?

Basically when I decided to put my studio together I wanted to do it all digital. It's cheaper and it's kind of neat to be able to do something that would usually cost three to four thousand dollars a day in a studio and be able to do it in your house. There is a sound difference and I can hear it, but no else cares. Putting that whole thing together and optimizing it and making it work, I just found it really fascinating. You have to know a lot about the details of the operating system and know how it works so you can get the best sound out of everything you record.

So is this going to be a business or just a hobby?

No, it's just for me. I'm really the only one that's recorded here so far. I taught myself everything and did a lot of research and jumped in. I didn't get into the digital aspect of music until I started building the studio and decided to take it in that direction. Hum was always a pretty organic band so we never really added many synthetic effects to the music. I always liked the Orb and the Chemical Brothers and bigger electronic bands, and then when I started doing this I thought, "hey, that's pretty cool, I want to learn how they do that." I never really gave much thought to what exactly was going on in their music before this studio thing. And then when Hum started to slow down I started to get into it more.

Since a lot of those techno bands started the technology has really come a long way, right?

Oh yeah, just in the last two years it's progressed by leaps and bounds. It's gotten so much cheaper too. I look at the stuff I have and I think that with the same amount of money I could probably double what I could do if I bought all that stuff now.

Jeff, let's talk about Hum. Why did Hum break up?

I don't know, it just kind of ended. After we got done touring for "Downward is Heavenward" in December of '98, we wrote ten more songs and demoed them at home. Things were going really slow and for the first time it was kind of a hassle to write songs. No one was really working on much band related stuff. But, we gave them to the label and they told us they didn't really hear a hit. That was the first time they ever said that to us.

Well, with the exception of "Stars" you guys were never really a hit-making band.

Oh yeah, and that was totally luck too. Our five and six minute songs didn't really work too well in a radio format. You understand how labels work; they want to make money. They invested so much into us and then they wanted to make it back, but in reality they lost their asses on us. So, they were looking for a hit song that they could push and I don't think we were really capable of writing the hit song they wanted. We

weren't interested in writing that type of song, so the band just sort of ended.

So, no fights or nasty break-ups?

Oh no, not at all. Officially we're not broken up yet. We're actually obligated to make a third record for them. If we want to put out another record they have to do that. I don't think we're ever going to do it, maybe maybe not. Sort of a sweet deal, but at this point there aren't any plans.

I know you didn't write the lyrics to Hum songs but what's up with the whole space theme in Hum?

You're not the first one to ask that. I think everyone wonders that at some point in listening to Hum. I think Matt just thought it was cool and that's about it. He likes reading the science fiction and I guess we had a pretty spacey sound, at least for a rock band. It's the kind of thing that you don't have to take seriously but you can if you want to. I like them 'cause they're not the typical "I love you" lyrics.

(laughter)

When exactly did Hum start out?

Matt and Brian got together in '89, I think. I joined in about '92.

I generally consider Hum the quintessential guitar attack band of the '90s. You guys wrote songs that weren't necessarily hard and not necessarily indie-sounding, but you had all those elements including the pop element. How did you guys approach writing music?

Well, Hum was really different and I never really real-

ized it while we were just playing local shows. When we finally got out on the road and toured I then understood

that we were doing something very different. Maybe we

were so different because other than the type of music we made, none of us really listened to that style on our stereos.

I'm kind of stuck in my ten to twenty-year old stage. You know, Gang of Four, the Clash, the Police, stuff like that. All of us were into different stuff. Brian listens to a lot of Rush, for instance. He was ten times a better drummer than any of the bands we played with, with his huge-ass drum set jammed onto the stage, and maybe that's because of all the prog rock he

listened to. All Tim listened to was rap!

So, why did you decide to form a band that played the way Hum did?

I have no idea. That's what we did best, I guess. Tim didn't write a lot of songs, per se, he wrote a lot of riffs. I mean, his biggest influence in learning to play guitar was stuff like Slayer. And I think the Slayer style isn't too far off from what our instrumental parts sounded like—although I don't think anyone else would make that comparison. He's an amazing metal guitarist and his talent is sort of hidden in our more pop sound. Matt and I are average players but Tim and Brian were incredible and they were original too.

So when you went out on the road and played with bands who fit into the same style sound as you were people turned off by your style of power-pop?

I think they were actually. I don't think

anyone really knew what to make of Hum for a long time. We didn't quite fit into the indie sound or the MTV sound or the alternative-radio sound. Hum was never a band that was cool until only very recently. We never got any

press, no one ever wanted to do interviews with us, and no

one ever paid us any attention.

I'm sorry I'm so late.

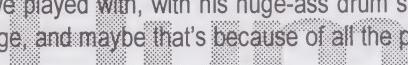
No it's fine. (laughter)

No one really cared.

Even after "Down-

ward is Heaven-

" came out we



were always looked at as the band that didn't fit into anyone's preferred format. I guess we never really presented ourselves well. We were never really part of a clique. We never had any friends outside of Champaign, we never had friends that published magazines or anything like that. That's how bands usually get big. Like Cibo Matto, the only reason they get written up in *Spin* everyday is because their best friends are the Beastie Boys.

That's fair. So, if you had done Hum again would you have made those connections?

I don't know. It's weird 'cause we were about to end Hum right when we got signed to a major. We all had good jobs and then we got offered a lot of money to forego those jobs.

If you had to group Hum with other bands, how would you do it?

Well, we always got compared to bands like Swervedriver because of our really spacey rock sounds. But, I always thought we fit better into the category of the stoner rock bands. I mean, with Tim's melodic metal guitar playing I think we sound more like Monster Magnet and Fu Manchu than we any of the Brit-pop stuff. **Okay, let's move onto National Skyline. From what I understand, your interest in National Skyline really began before Hum ended.**

Yeah, 'cause I had always played guitar. I just played guitar all the time at home and I had all these crappy riffs, so I thought, "I wonder if I can put this all together and make it interesting." I talked to a few people and told them I had an idea for a cool instrumental band. I just wanted to play guitar and forget that bass stuff. At first the stuff National Skyline did was all instrumental, just guitar, bass, and drums. It was never supposed to be a band, just guys playing together. When Hum started winding down, I decided to put a real band together. The thing that was bad about that is that I think I tried to be too serious about it. I thought the band was going to make it and be huge, and we kind of sucked. So that band broke up. At that point it was a band with no digital sounds at all. It became digitized when Jeff Garber and I hooked up and decided a lot of the stuff we wanted to do couldn't be done with guitars.

The new EP is basically you and Jeff playing guitar and singing with a bunch of digital effects basically.

Yeah, but we have some real drums and bass in there as well. It's kind of organic and electronic at the same time. It's not bla-

tantly electronic like the Chemical Brothers or the Prodigy or anything like that. Maybe it's like the new Flaming Lips album.

I'm thinking it's much like the Antarctica stuff.

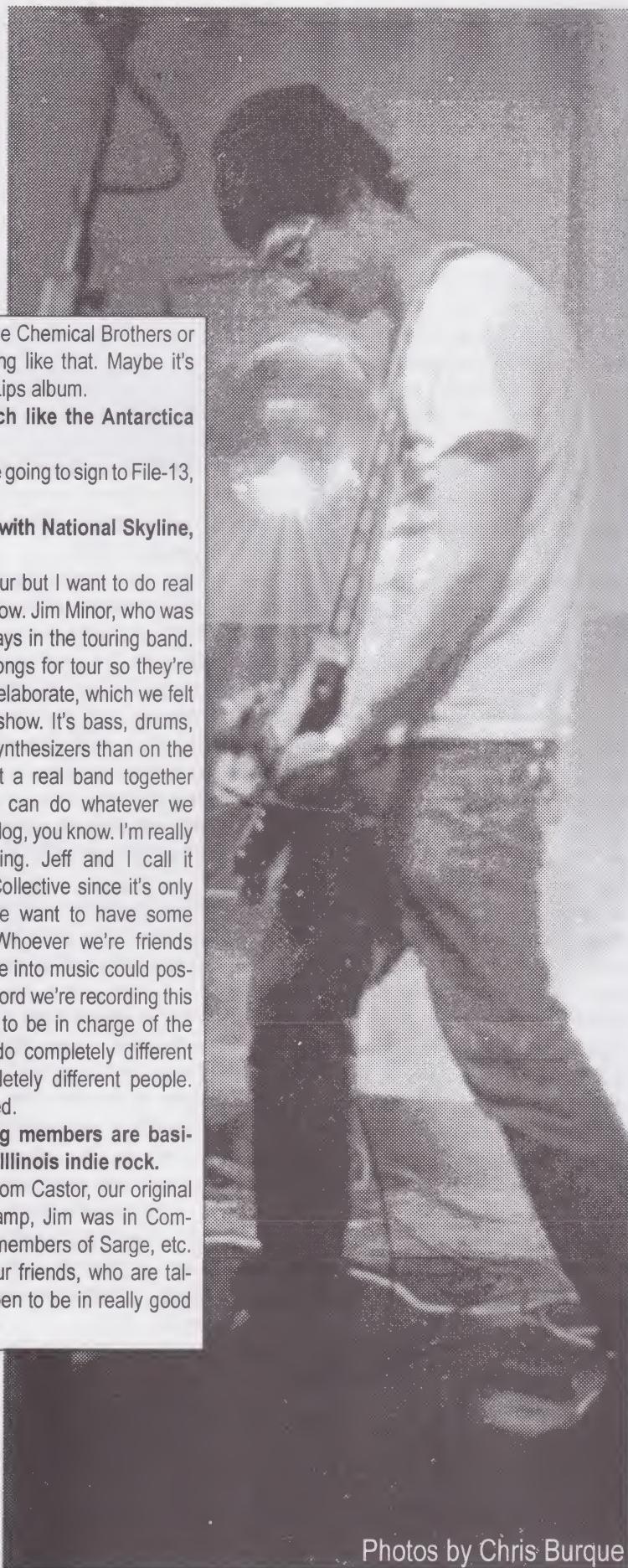
Totally and I think we're going to sign to File-13, so there you go.

Now, you don't tour with National Skyline, right?

Right. Jeff wants to tour but I want to do real work and not tour for now. Jim Minor, who was in Compound Red, plays in the touring band. Jeff re-wrote all the songs for tour so they're longer and a bit more elaborate, which we felt was best for the live show. It's bass, drums, and guitar, and less synthesizers than on the record. I'd love to get a real band together eventually, where we can do whatever we want: electronic or analog, you know. I'm really excited about this thing. Jeff and I call it the National Skyline Collective since it's only really us and then we want to have some revolving members. Whoever we're friends with that happens to be into music could possibly appear on the record we're recording this summer. We're going to be in charge of the music but we might do completely different things live with completely different people. Kind of like Spiritualized.

And, you're revolving members are basically a who's-who of Illinois indie rock.

Yeah, we've got Jeff from Castor, our original drummer was in C-clamp, Jim was in Compound Red, we have members of Sarge, etc. It just happens that our friends, who are talented musicians, happen to be in really good bands.



Photos by Chris Burque

F.Y.P.

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Different Dogs

by Adam Lindenbaum

I live in Ithaca, New York a small town where taking yourself either way too seriously, or not nearly seriously enough, tends to polarize the community. Atop Ithaca's East Hill, Cornell University and its 135 years of history impose itself on the community. Featuring an army of

buildings and a high-ground any army strategist would covet, Cornell's looming eyes always has the town within its sight. Combining the geographical stature with the superiority of an Ivy League education, an undeniable chunk of Cornell's competitive student body refuses to surface without the promise of 65 degree weather, a party with free poached dill salmon, or promising alumni contact.

Down the hill, not metaphorically speaking, lives an intellectual community that generally shuns the steep climb. Not because the walk is so difficult or an obnoxiously large S.U.V. might clip your parked car on the street, but that many permanent Ithaca residents choose to admire the University from a distance. They appreciate the employment, revenue and higher awareness that seeps into the community, yet prefer not to identify with the students in a social capacity. Resulting is a resounding amount of pride that emanates from the local music scene, political and environmental activism, and historical appreciation.

I graduated six months ago, and have since made it a goal to saunter down the hill more often. Without the pressures of academia, it has been easier to appreciate that which does not fly five feet from my nose. I tried to put my degree in labor relations to use immediately, but it seems like half the town holds an undergraduate Cornell diploma. To make a long job search story shorter... I deliver pizza.

This slowly brings me to my story which illustrates that everyone gets uptight regardless of your self-perceived importance. That would be, speaking in stereotypes, that the students are pressured and pissy, while members of our town are apathetic and strange.

Hillary Clinton was coming to speak at Barton Hall on Cornell's campus one Friday evening, but I was stuck working on my normal 11-5 shift. I had done well in tips that day, around \$60 in six hours of driving. At 4:45 p.m., fifteen minutes before the end of my shift, the phone rang with an order.

"Five large meat, five large veggie, five large plain, six

liters Evian, four liters Coke, four liters Diet for Barton Hall Six O'clock," the phone operator shouted to the pit.

The manager of the store promptly called a meeting to coordinate the efforts of the pizza maker, boxer, delivery manager and eventually, me the lucky driver. Funny how it takes five people to get someone a pizza, let alone the First Lady.

The meeting wasn't much of a secret, as the manager coordinated these efforts on a table just outside the driver work station. I overheard most of this meeting as I was pouring sodas, so here are some of the more interesting parts pertaining to me.

"Okay, let's send Adam. He shaved today and he has the nicest car," the manager said.

"He already had a big order today," the driver manager objected. "Give it to someone else."

"Forget that. He knows what he's doing. Send him," the manager spoke the final word.

With more precision than clipping a bonsai tree, the manager carefully placed each pepperoni, each olive, each mushroom with a little slice of love. Extra cheese, symmetricough, neatly spread sauce about as exact as pizza gets.

"Hey Cornell," the manager calls me around the store. "These are beautiful pies do not tilt them."

I loaded everything in my trunk, including the pizzas, drinks, plastic flatware, plates, napkins, straws, cups everything short of the after-dinner mints. Then, with a force so indescribable, the manager grabbed both of my arms from the biceps.

"Smile God damn it," he demanded, "and be nice."

Four years of training for today's competitive job market should not allow this guy to frazzle me. I nodded and assured him on my way out the door. As I was pulling out of the lot on my three mile drive to the University, however, I admittedly felt nervous. What was I going to say to this woman that I'd be pleased to meet, but kill myself if I ever

voted for in the Senate race. I've lived in New York all my life, and I don't know anywhere near all the issues that face our state. She could take her national agenda and two million dollar home back to Arkansas.

Anyway, I knew I would not be saying something trite like, "Hope you enjoy Ithaca" or "Good luck in the election." I concluded I would be either something witty like, "Stop trying to buy my vote with this tip" or a simple "Thank you Mrs. Clinton, enjoy."

I pulled toward the back entrance of Barton and opened my trunk. A large truck came whipping around the corner, missing the tailgate by six inches. The driver stopped abruptly after he cleared it, waiting for me to come around to his side of the cab.

"Hey Adam! Got my pizza?" a familiar voice bellowed.

It was one of my good friends, Wilson, who works for a sound company in Ithaca that runs large events like this, along with mid-sized concerts and speeches. Wilson's boss ordered the pizzas for his crew, and Hillary had long since left the building. She probably planned an exquisite meal at one of Ithaca's fine and eclectic restaurants. In retrospect, this makes more sense than our mediocre pizza for her one night in town, doesn't it?

Laughing at myself had never been easier, as I returned to my home base to punch out. Feeling slightly nervous at the manager's strict instructions and fumbling with what I'd say were amusing. Not putting realistic odds on the chance that the First Lady of the United States of America would be signing the credit card slip was hilarious to me. I'm such an idiot.

The seriousness of my manager, however, is funny on a different level. Maybe he was a little uptight, but he should be. He sacrificed taking the pizzas himself, getting the \$15 tip and meeting the First Lady just so he could watch the store at its busiest time. I respect him for being overly-cautious in this situation. Selling to famous people equals bragging rights.

I felt sad when I had to tell him it was only my friend Wilson who ordered, but my manager probably got over it immediately. Those beautiful pizzas might not gain him any bragging rights at his next poker game, but I guarantee that Wilson's crew will place an order for the next local job they do.

I have been toggling the fence between a Cornell student and Ithaca townie all semester. In the past, when my schoolwork got tough, I'll be the first to tell you that I got serious. In my day, I fit into the Ivy League student stereotype well. But the real question is whether my seriousness in this pizza delivery incident is part of me only, or part of the locals' routine just the same. People take seriously what is important to them, which is more than okay, it's how it should be with all things. Be it music, art, sports or making pizza and chicken wings loving and taking pride in what you do is admirable. But just like the frightening reality of Cornell students who rip up notebooks found in the library to boost their class rankings, seriousness often turns ugly. In my experience, vying for the pizza delivery dollar has been just as cutthroat as competing for class rank. There are professional drivers who know every trick in the book.

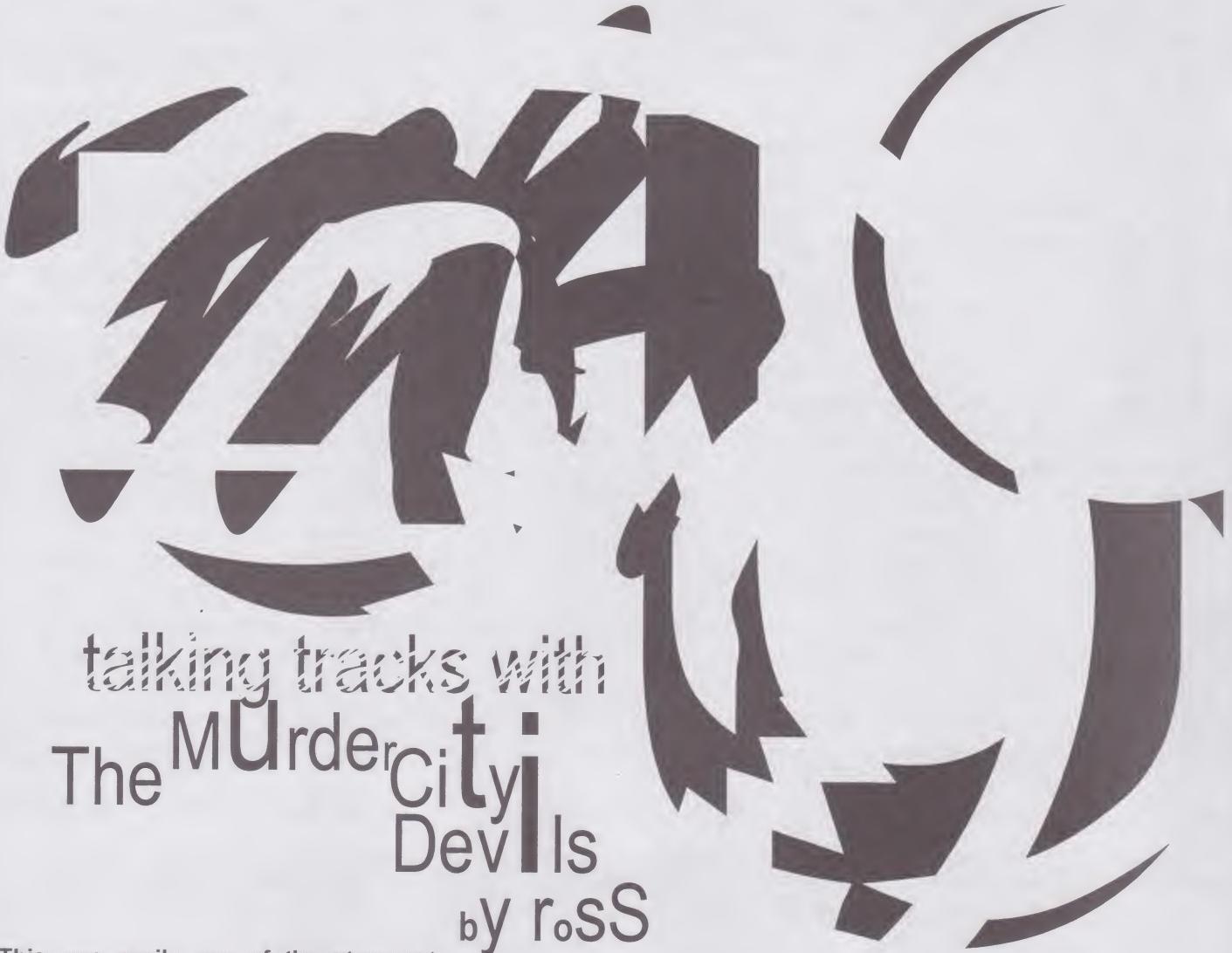
A classic move is the slow drive. If there are three small orders and one big order in queue, a reversal of behavior occurs. Where most of the time, quicker driving equals more runs which equals more money, just the opposite holds true in this small window of the shift. The driver of the first small run should return before the driver of the second run just in time for the third small one. Instead, he tarries (at the bank, post office, etc.) so he will have the big order and usually, the bigger gratuity when he returns.

There are the more subtle moves, one which I just fell prey to the other week. The driver manager's job is to dispatch the food to the drivers and keep track of "quality runs" to make chances for tips somewhat equal. While the drivers' shift ends at 5:00 p.m., the driver managers' shift ends at 4:00 p.m. One day, we had three drivers and three big runs, one for each. I was to receive the third, but it came at 4:30 and after the driver managers changed hands. One of the professional drivers lied by saying he hadn't had a large order that day. When I returned, it was already gone.

Looking at the big picture, we're talking about a five to seven dollar difference. Have I forgiven the transgressor of driver etiquette? Of course. Will I let it happen to me again? Not knowingly.

Only a thin line separates the people I have encountered this year. How different are the students clawing their way up the class rank, the restaurant manager coercing smiles to please our leading lady and drivers swindling their co-workers for the difference of a set of guitar strings? There are overly-competitive people in all social, racial, ethnic, sexual and professional walks of life. Being aware of them can help in two capacities. First, realizing that their motivation is constructed to support themselves and second, knowing to keep your wits about when around them.

To me, this dividing line that is drawn between the town is an unnecessary one. My anecdotes don't tell the whole story, but my experiences have let me see a disjoined community from both ends of town. I'd feel comfortable calling both sides home.



talking tracks with The MUrder City Devils

by roSS

This was easily one of the strangest interviews I've ever done. I was in Austin, Texas with some friends and we decided to go see Seattle's Murder City Devils at some club on 6th Street. I happened to have a tape recorder and camera in my backpack, so I decided to inquire about an interview with Spencer from the band. He agreed, but asked me to wait until his rum and coke was safely buried in his stomach. About 20 minutes later, as one of his friends peeled his face off the bar counter, I figured the interview was not going to happen. To my surprise, Spencer suddenly got a second wind and yelled: "hey, do you still want to do the interview?" Shocked, I agreed and we walked across the street. I thought this would surely be the worst interview I would ever do, but Spencer is one of the more articulate drunks I've met in a while and we actually had a very good-- albeit amusing-- little chat.

Hi Spencer, how's the tour going?

Very well, we're having a really good time. And, the shows we're playing haven't had any shitty opening bands. Just good ones like the Yo-yo's, the Catheters, and Dead & Gone.

Cool, ready to start?

Sure, but I must warn you: I've got the hiccups.

Um, I'll edit them out. Anyways, what are your favorite records on Sub Pop?

Anything by Earth, 'cause I can listen to them and fall asleep or read a book. They're very dream-like. I can sort of zone out to them or else just listen to their music. They're so minimalist and it makes me not feel paranoid or guilty... just nice.

Did you see that "Kurt and Courtney" movie?

Yes, unfortunately.

What did you think of what the dude from Earth said about Kurt?

He said something like Kurt had enough money to be a junkie for the rest of his life and he didn't understand why Kurt kept on trying to quit. That is the most fucked up thing I've ever heard. That's so incredibly fucked up and weird to like doing heroin enough that he wouldn't at all want to quit, nor understand why anyone else wouldn't feel the same way.

But it didn't do anything to change your opinion of his band?

No, although I recognize that their music is all about heroin. I consider that guy a good reason not to do heroin. I can listen to their music and have a really good time without even thinking about drugs.

What records do you listen to that may be considered grunge?

I listen to "Superfuzz Bigmuff" [by Mudhoney] a lot, and I also like "Bleach" [by Nirvana]. I think the first two Mudhoney records are classic. They are so raw and balls to the wall. Tad's "Eight Way Santa" was good too. I really wasn't too caught up in the grunge thing but there were some great records that came out even before grunge was even called grunge and featured in every magazine in the world.

How about when you're in the van on tour?

This tour I've been listening to the Dirty Three a lot, along with the Smithsonian's Folkways Collection, which is awesome. Let's see what else? Oh yeah, Nancy Sinatra. I've actually been enjoying the Super-suckers lately and I didn't used to. In the van we basically all listen to our walkmans so we don't fight about who gets to play what. But, we all listen to the Pogues and Tom Waits. The Yo-yo's, who we're touring with right now, are fucking amazing every night and I can't wait for a record from them.

What records do you dislike that happened to have been made by bands you love?

Anything the Rolling Stones did in the '80s I'm not into. It's just not as good as their older stuff. The production got totally ridiculous. To me the best Stones record is "Flowers" 'cause the production is totally fucked up and so raw and nasty. I would say that generally speaking no band should be around for more than 10 years. There's some Pogues stuff that I think they shouldn't have done, but other than that I can't think of any.

What metal records have you been listening to lately?

We've been listening to Mayhem a lot. They rule! We've also been listening to a lot of early Metallica like "Ride the Lightning." Oh yeah, their newer records are terrible and they used to be a great band.

So, what's the consensus: are Metallica fuckers for this Napster lawsuit?

No, but I do think it's ridiculous for them to care about that sort of stuff since they're probably one of the most money making bands in history. I've heard people explain their case in a way that makes sense to me. Personally, I could give a shit about the internet. If people want to download our music then that's fine. I think a lot of people buy records not just for the music but also to own something tangible in addition to the music. An MP3 doesn't have a sleeve with artwork and lyrics. So, I'm really

not that concerned that we won't sell records because of Napster. To make a long story short, Metallica are a bit too self-concerned but they're not fuckers.

What are your make-out records?

Um, Neil Diamond's "the Early Years." His early stuff is amazing.

I can't imagine anyone wanting to make-out to Neil Diamond.

[suddenly serious] Neil Diamond is the best. His songs are so good and the songs are written so well and are so well performed. Neil's music is love making music. (laughter) Other than that the Pogues would be up there for like poist-coital bliss music; Barry White, obviously; "Closing Time" by Tom Waits.

Who do you like to see live?

Nick Cave because he's so incredible to watch up there. His records are great and the songs are well written, but live it just transcends. He's so fucking amazing live. He doesn't really have the best voice in the world, but he presents himself like one of those old crooners. It's like seeing Frank Sinatra if he were young and going crazy. I love seeing Tom Waits as well.

What records are your guilty pleasures?

Um, I hate this band with a passion and I hate them as people but on their new record I love some Red Hot Chilli Peppers songs. They really are my least favorite band of all time but I love that song "Scar Tissue." Don't worry, though, I'd never buy anything from them. Oh, Billy Joel I like too, and he is so unhip... maybe even more unhip than the Chili Peppers. But, "Piano Man" and "Scenes from an Italian Restaurant" are great. The actual

execution may not be the best but the song writing is so good. Some of his slower stuff isn't that much different than that of Tom Waits, it's just that the delivery is so much better in the latter.

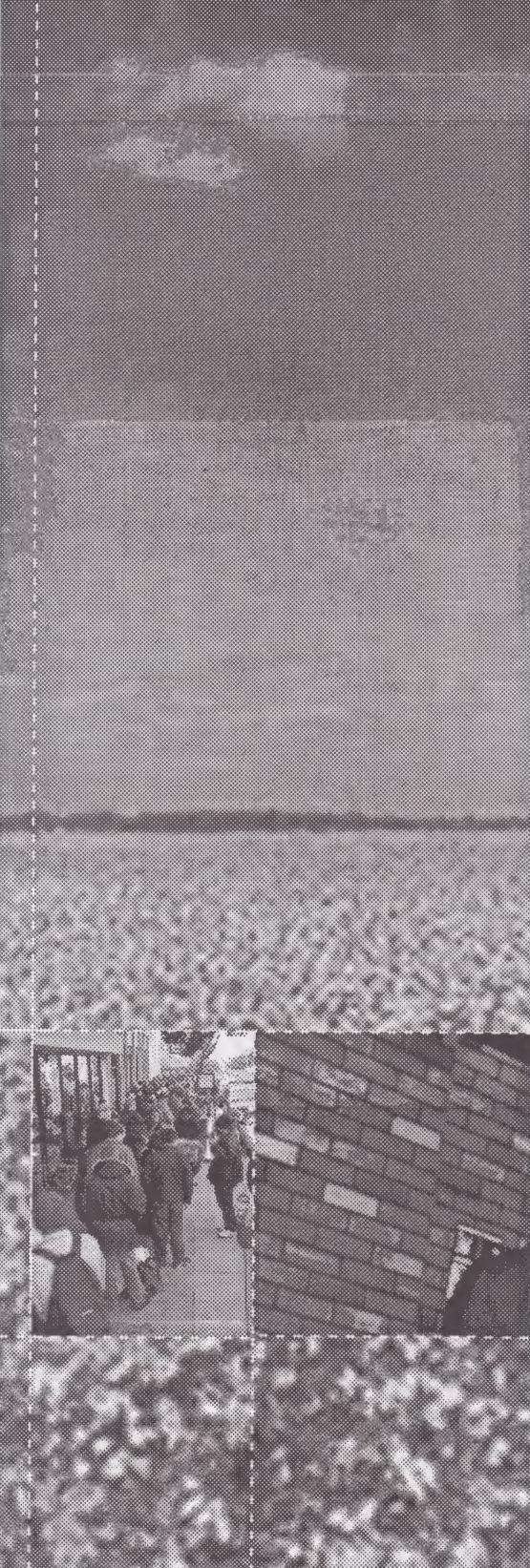
Thanks Spencer, that was fun.

No problem, Rob, I had fun too.

Um, my name is Ross, not Rob.

Oh sorry, Russ. See you inside.

David Kaplan



My father recently lost a tooth. It's one of the front ones, on the bottom. He says people now sometimes mistake him for a retarded person, and he offered this anecdote:

"I go in to the store to buy some candy and they say, "OK, that's \$2.75 for the candy. And you gave me a five-dollar bill, so that means your change is \$2.25."

At which point he begins acting like a retarded person—a 400-pound, sweet-toothed, retarded person. This is an article about a recent visit with my enigmatic, Elvis-impersonating, very caring, but not always (financially) supportive, intelligent, yet childish, loving, and sometimes very trying father. Enjoy.

My father and I celebrated Father's Day a week early this year, since I wasn't going to be in town on the actual date. I was at home, in Maryland for a week to get my wisdom teeth out, and like any time that I return to my home town of Columbia, I made my "obligatory" visit to my father's house, located a mere 25 minutes away in Glen Burnie, MD. Obligatory is in quotes not only because my visits aren't actually mandatory, but also because I genuinely want to see my dad and spend time with him when I can.

My visits do feel/ obligatory, however, because for my dad to feel satisfied that we have had a "good visit," I must spend the night. It doesn't really matter if I come over at eight o'clock, eat something, watch a movie, go to bed, and then go home the next day by noon, just as long as I have slept up in the loft with the cats. I think this has something to do with his desire for me to consider his house my "home".

I understand this desire, but sleep over as I might, I have a hard time thinking of his house as my home. After four years of living at school, I even have a tough time thinking of the house I lived in for eighteen years (in Columbia) as home. My mother has accepted this, I think, because she now asks me, "When are you going home . . . to Ithaca?" Another reason his house doesn't scream "home": he has yet to unpack the boxes from the move, three years ago.

So there I was in his "new" house, ready for a two-day, one-night adventure. We had already stopped for dinner, so objective number one was out of the way. We were sitting on the couch and discussing all the things we didn't have time to do, such as playing knock-hockey, and looking at all the old baseball cards, and playing chess, until we decided to pop in the first of three movies which we would watch during the next 24 hours. It was "Girl Interrupted," which kept my attention while my dad began dozing. He woke up and turned on his computer, a new toy, which he had barely learned to manipulate, and proceeded to check his email and look up antique clocks on e-bay.

That's another thing about my father: he loves to buy worthless shit. In his box-crowded living room, there are not one, but two of those huge cabinet phonographs with the speakers built in. I mean they weren't expensive or anything, but owning two of them is ridiculous. The second one came from a garage sale where he saw some old barbershop records he wanted (oh yeah, he sings in a barbershop chorus and quartet), but the lady wouldn't let him buy the records unless he took the record player off her hands (I think it was free). This is just a small example of the multitudinous "chachkas" (which must be Yiddish for completely worthless pieces of shit) that clutter his world and sap his income. He is not rich at all; one income, plenty of debt, and yet, I can't help but be a little pissed off that every year, when filing for financial aid, I had to get him to write a letter saying how much he would love to help pay for my school, but just didn't have the money.

My mom is more than a little pissed off about this, and she has a right because, back in the day, he made it real hard for my mom to get the child support, until she got the court to take it out of his paycheck. And then when I went to college, my mom and step-

To Tell the Truth

father paid for it all with a shitload of help from the university, and the federal government. Even when my step-father lost his job the summer before my freshman year, and when my mom lost hers two years later they found a way to keep me at school. My father paid for me to get my engine fixed freshman year—the car stopped working in November of my sophomore year. My mom does help to confuse the situation, however, by alternating between questioning why I place such a priority on visiting him, and telling me how good it is that I do. "He must be lonely," she says, and it's true.

He lives with a woman named Suzie, who is a very nice recently divorced Asian lady with two children, one around my age, and one a couple of years older. The son, Jeremy, went to China after graduating college in California, and the older daughter spent a couple of years in Hawaii after her parents' divorce. It seems that they are not that comfortable hanging out with their mom and my dad. Well, big-hearted accepting me likes Suzie (actually Su-San), but things have been on the rocks between them for over a year now, and they don't hang out together very much. They sing together at church sometimes (yes my Jewish father is an enigma), and sleep in the same bed (the place has two bedrooms, but one is wall-to-wall boxes) but their relationship, my father confided to me, is completely platonic and not very supportive emotionally. It's just that they bought the house together so...what to do?

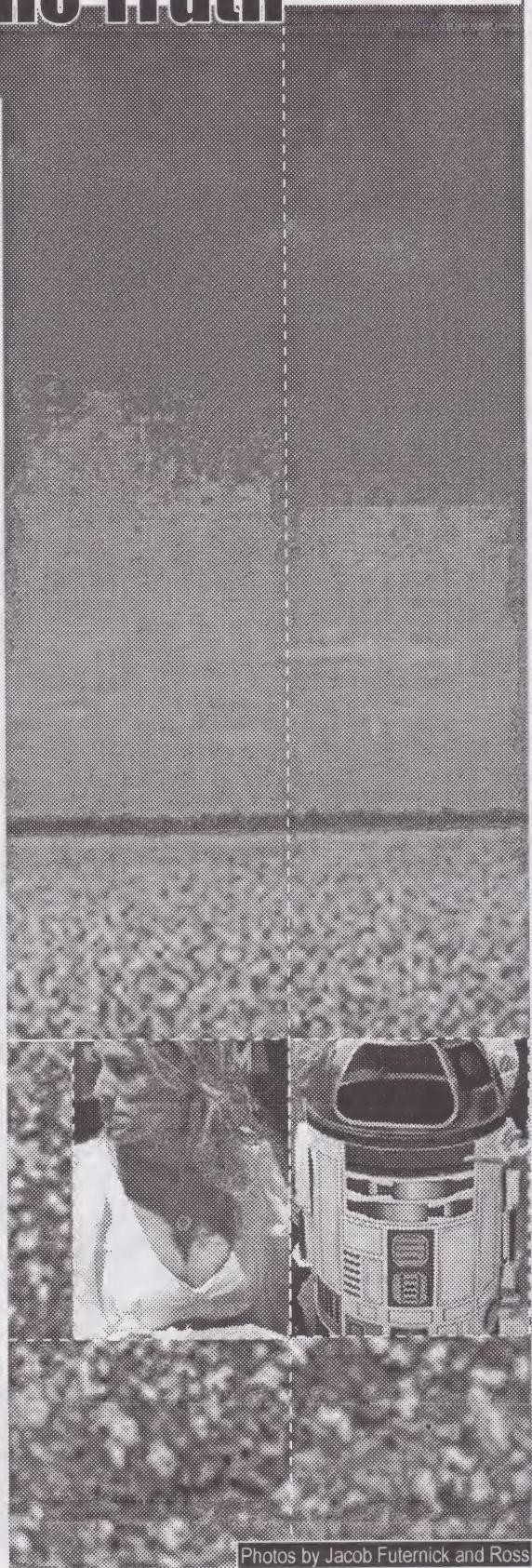
He doesn't have any really close friends to speak of. His wonderful friend Joe (who came to my Bar Mitzvah with my dad) disappeared a few years ago, perhaps tired of being the selfless individual he was around someone who could accept so many favors. So I am one of my father's only surviving outlets, I suppose. My sister is very impatient with him and although she lives at home in Columbia (remember, a mere 25 minutes away) she sees him substantially less often than I do (which has been about six times a year). They are both waiting for the other to call, and I have tired of trying to bring them together through force and guilt.

Here's another funny thing about my father: every time he calls me in Ithaca and I am not at home, he leaves a message which begins, "David, it's your father, calling from Glen Burnie, MD...." It's like his trademarked line, and although my housemates and I find it pretty funny, I just don't understand why he tells me what city he's calling from. It's always Glen Burnie, MD. I don't think he goes anywhere else, ever.

"*Girl Interrupted*" ends and my dad wants to watch, I'm not kidding here, "*Runaway Bride*." Although I am slightly incredulous at the suggestion, I don't really care and we start it up. I could devote a whole other article to just how sucky this movie was. It was so bad that I suggest that you watch it. If this is the kind of movie that America desires, than it is an awful mirror of our collective idiocy. That's enough about that.

Afterwards we talk some and he begins to recount some of his capsized life stories, and I listen patiently until my patience for repetition wears out. Sometimes when we visit we play music together. Me on keyboard or guitar and him singing. We didn't do any this time, unfortunately. One time we made a 45 minute tape of us sort of free-styling over a twangy country progression. We labeled "the crazy tape" and he told me not to play it for any of my friends because they would think we were drunk or on drugs.

I go to bed and don't wake up until about 3:00 o'clock the next day. My dad had woken up about 1:30, so it wasn't so bad. He returned from Rite Aid with two huge Hershey Bars, a box of double dipped, chocolate covered peanuts, a pack of Pringles and some soda. We started watching *The Apostle*, stopped it midway through to order a pizza (two pizzas actually), and ate them on the couch with his three dogs (two of which are greyhounds) and his two cats hovering around, hoping for scraps. When the movie was over he drove me home, and we said goodbye. A few days ago I got an email that started, "Dave, it was a super great visit." And I guess it was, since it made him so happy. The only problem is that I hate it when people call me Dave, but I am patient.



Photos by Jacob Futernick and Ross

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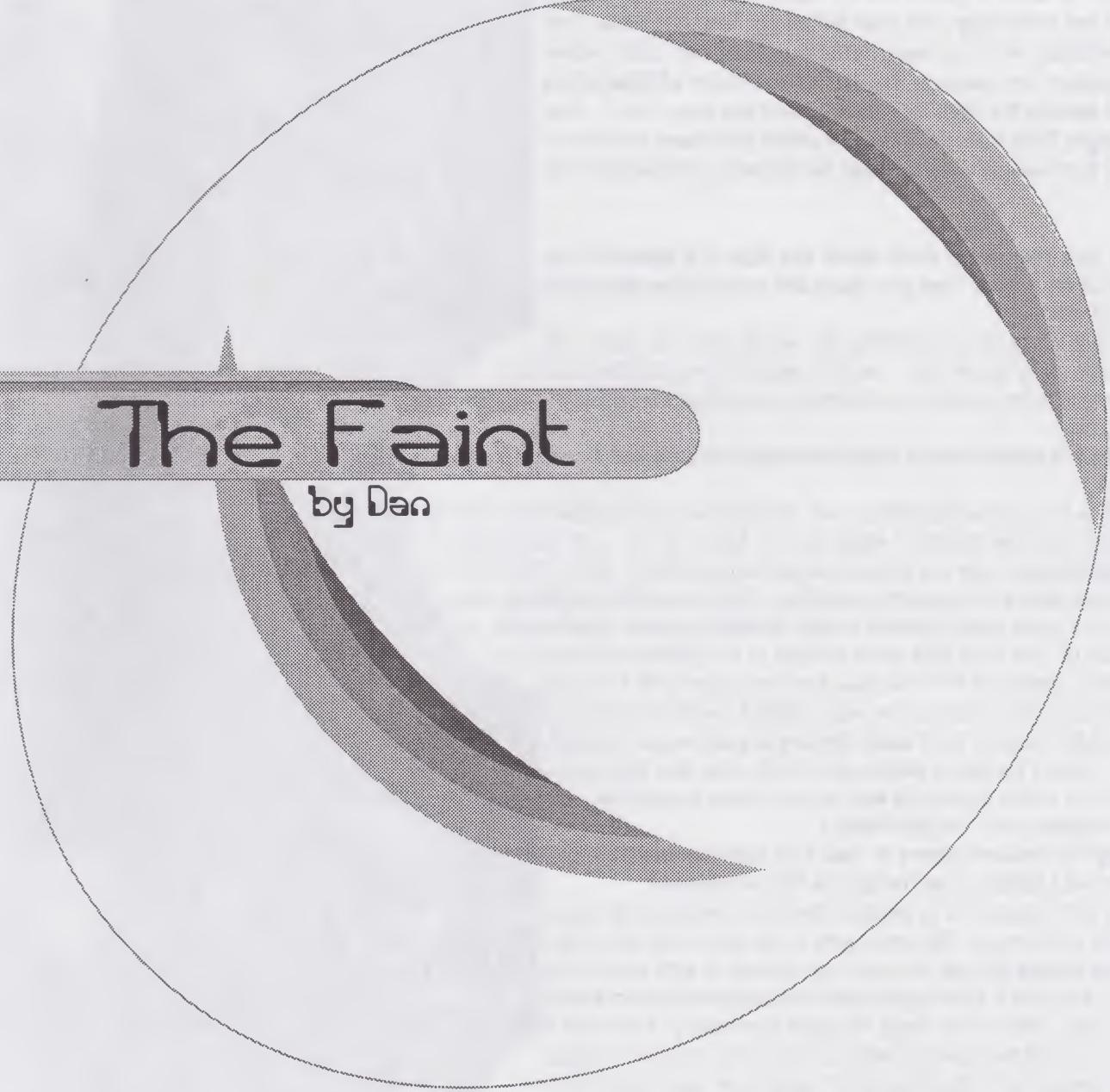
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The Faint

by Dan

Every week, when the music directors for my school radio station add a hundred or so recent albums to the new release bin in the studio, they affix a little gold star next to their favorite album or two. When the Faint's "Blank-Wave Arcade" got added a few months back, it didn't have a star... but by the end of the week DJs had written stars all over it. Stars and exclamation points. It's not hard to see why – "Blank-Wave Arcade" is an album of phenomenal quality, blending angular, buzzsaw guitars with deeply introspective lyrics and keyboard lines that sound like they could have jumped off of your favorite 80's new wave album. The Faint's music is either sleek, sexy, and cool, or wildly crazed and desperately passionate... I can't tell which. At times it seems like it's both. That's the real dichotomy with the Faint: they rock your ear off but they don't lose their pop sensibilities in the process. With a phenomenal remix album on the shelves, my guess is that it's only a matter of time before you start hearing the Faint everywhere. And you know why? They rock. Singer Todd Baechle is modest about the recent success of the band, but I was still able to glean the following information from him.

How did your new album come about and how is it different from your first album? What were your goals and expectations going into recording the album?

Our band has wanted to do something that nobody else was doing. We include ourselves in that as well – we don't want to repeat anything that we've done already. For the new album, we wanted to make the live set a little bit more fun to see and play...

So the album is geared around songs that would translate well into a live environment?

Yeah, they're more upbeat and dance-y. At the time I was playing guitar and a little bit of keyboards, but I decided that it would be more fun for me if I could mostly sing and play keyboards every once in a while, so we got a new keyboard player. We ended up using the keyboards a lot more on the new album. Right around the time that the album came out, our guitar player switched to bass because our bass player couldn't go on tour with us, and since then we've sampled all the guitars that were on the album. We've decided to be a four-piece band and make up for it by using our sequencer more and taking more responsibility for what we had to play.

Have you had to learn a lot of studio trickery to produce your sound?

Not really. Most of the time at practice we just talk rather than play music – we spend a lot of time figuring out what we want things to sound like. Our practices definitely aren't very jam-oriented.

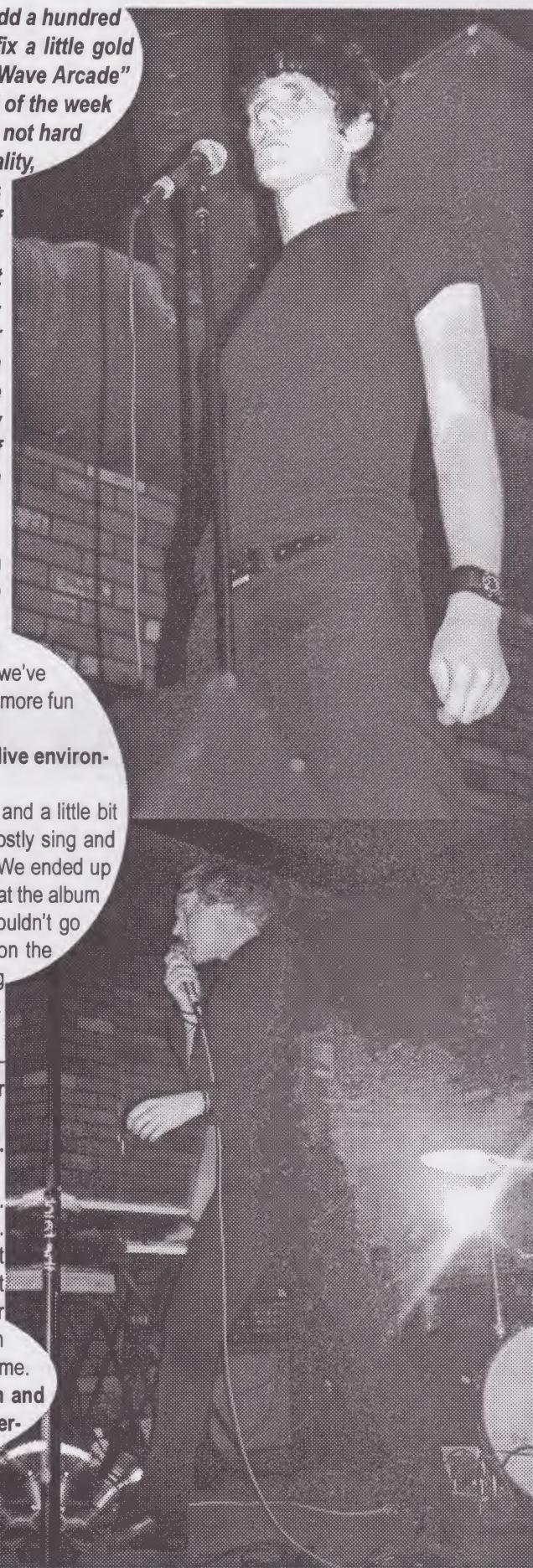
Your song "In Concert" seems to deal a lot with live performances.

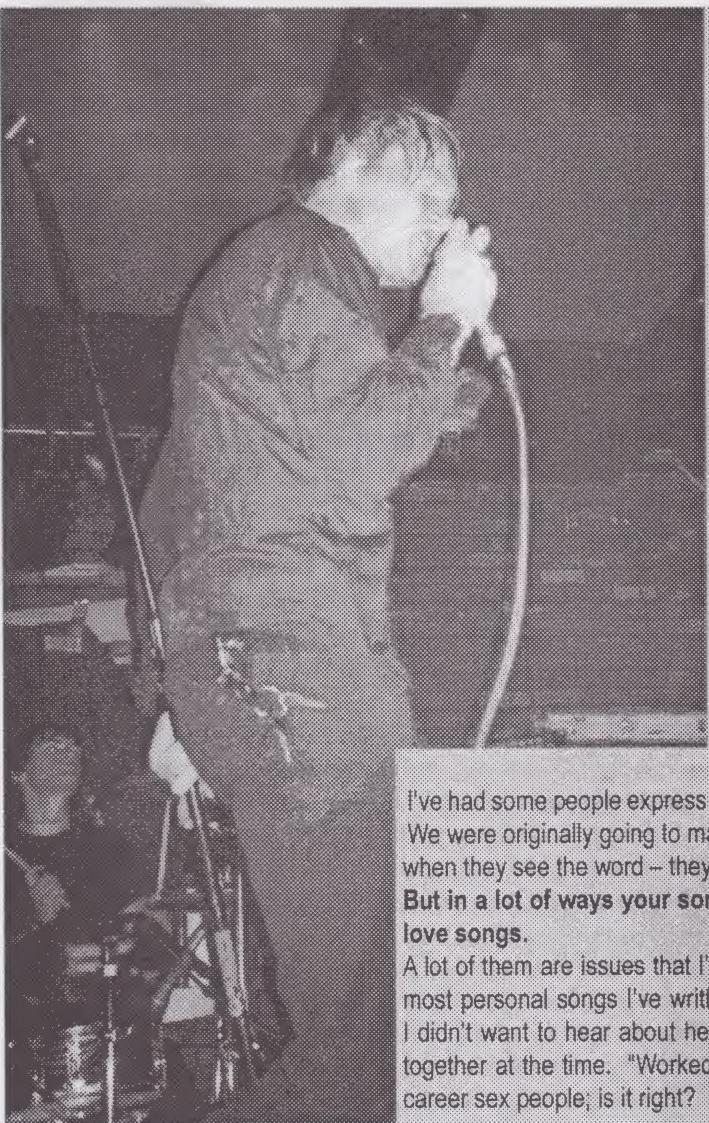
Have you had a history of bad receptions from audiences?

That song isn't supposed to be negative toward the crowds at our shows. I wrote that song because few bands write songs about their own shows. Most bands pretend like they have so many interests to write songs about but most of their time is spent playing music and answering questions about their own band. Most of our songs are social commentary of one kind or another – it's part of my process of writing a song and figuring out my opinion on certain things I see in life. I go over both sides of an issue most of the time.

It seems like a lot of your songs deal with themes of communication and miscommunication. Not about isolation, per se, but about a lack of personal interconnectedness.

I think that a lot of the "Media" album is about being





trapped by words. It seems like we're such an advanced species that we should be able to go beyond using the same thousand words all the time. There ought to be some form of communication that's bigger and better and more true. The Eskimos have hundreds of words for snow, each of which represents a different idea related to one object. I wish we had more words to choose from, too. People don't invent words often enough.

Do you think art exists to abstract the concept of words and take it a step further?

Yes. In the indie and punk scenes, people frown upon things for being "too arty." I don't understand that – most bands play it casual and pass themselves off as just being a hobby, no big deal, but I think that everything is art and there's no such thing as being too arty. There's just more and less creative. Most people settle for less in that the bands that get popular usually sound like other bands that are already popular.

Do you intend for there to be a single interpretation of your message when you play?

No, I definitely think that everything should be open to interpretation. My lyrics usually deal with only one idea but I'm conscious of not making them too direct.

Have you ever had someone interpret one of your songs in a different way from how you had intended it?

I've had some people express confusion over the songs on the new record that have sex in the title. We were originally going to make an EP dealing only with themes of sex, and people get confused when they see the word – they think they're dealing with somebody who's sex-crazed.

But in a lot of ways your songs deal with the darker side of sexuality. They're certainly not love songs.

A lot of them are issues that I'm trying to deal with in my own life. "Sex is Personal" is one of the most personal songs I've written... it's about someone who I was dating in an open relationship. I didn't want to hear about her having sex with other people, particularly because we were living together at the time. "Worked up so Sexual" is my way of working through the pros and cons of career sex people; is it right? Is it good? In my ideal world, would it exist?

It seems like as much as historically sex has been integral to rock and roll, in the sense of "drugs, sex, and rock and roll," very few bands have actually tried to initiate a dialogue about it or discuss it on a deeper level. Have people expressed discomfort hearing songs like that?
Yeah, but we've all heard so many love songs that we're desensitized... the words are just rehashing other songs. They don't get through to my head. Usually when people write about sex, it comes across as distasteful or stupid, but we wanted to see what would happen if we tried our hand at it.

How did your collaboration with Lullaby for the Working Class come about?

Well, I had a melody for a 25-second long song in my head, and I wanted it to sound like them. The two brothers in the band own Dead Space, the studio we all record in, so it wasn't too much work to get them to do a little ditty with us.

How is the scene in Omaha? It seems like the city is undergoing something of a musical renaissance.

Five or six years ago there were all sorts of bands in Omaha, most of whom lost their popularity or moved away. There was one band called Mousetrap that was really influential to everybody here, but they're in Chicago now, under a different band name every month. I got interested in music by seeing a band called Slowdown Virginia, who eventually turned into Cursive. They were everything I had ever wanted in music, and that was when I decided I wanted to start a band myself.

You're about to go on tour with the Vue and Camera Obscura. Do you have any hopes or expectations for the tour?

It looks like this is going to be a really good tour for us. Our last two tours went really well, but we did a whole bunch before that were barely worth doing. When we were touring for the "Media" album the audience reaction wasn't as good, our stage show and confidence and singing were all worse...

Was it scary for you the first time you went on the road?

Not really. I had already been on the road before with a band called Commander Venus, who later turned into Bright Eyes, and I've toured with Lullaby for the Working Class as well.

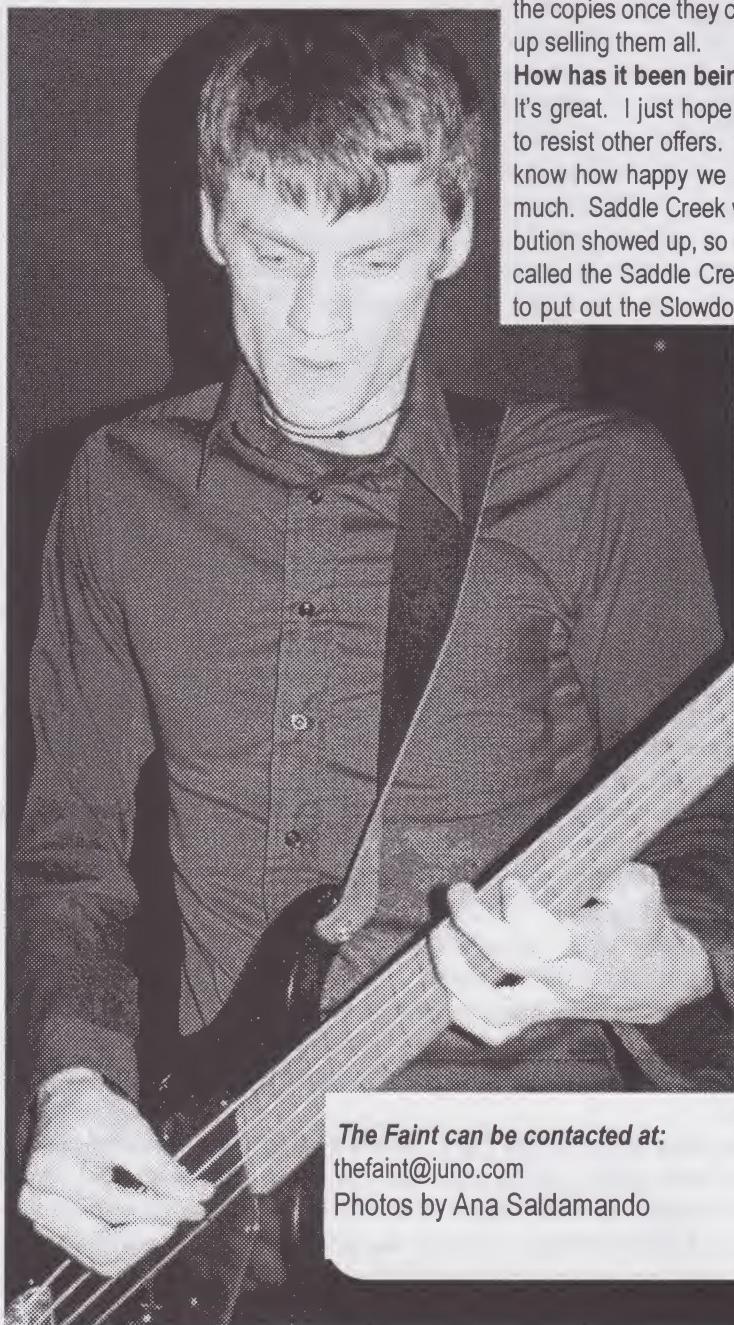
Your brother plays drums for the Faint. How is it being in a band with a sibling?

We're seven years apart – I'm the older one – so he's quite a bit younger. We've always been friends... we never argue. All of us in the band have known each other for ages through skateboarding, except our new guy, Jacob, who we met a little over a year ago. I think we've finally found our fourth permanent member. This is the configuration we're going to stick with.

Your brother must have been 13 when the band started.

Yeah, he was something like that. I think he was 12. But he didn't join the band for our first six months – at that point we were just trying to figure out how to play. He joined at the same time that Conor from Bright Eyes joined. We did one tape under a different name and then he left. Actually he got kicked out.

When I read reviews of "Blank-Wave Arcade" I see a lot of comparisons to various 80's new wave bands, especially the Cure and Duran Duran. Do you think those comparisons are justified or do they puzzle you?



The Faint can be contacted at:

thefaint@juno.com

Photos by Ana Saldamando

Most of the Cure references we've gotten have been from the "Media" album, and I can see that. One of the songs on the album was intentionally supposed to sound like the Cure. As for Duran Duran, well, I like them, but there's only one verse of one song of ours that reminds me of anything Duran Duran would do. I really like them but it's not like I'm not crazy about all their new records and want to sound just like them.

What's the most embarrassing record in your collection?

None of them are embarrassing to me, but other people usually laugh at my Falco section.

What brought about your split with the Ex-Action Figures?

The Ex-Action Figures is actually just one guy who hires people to play what he writes for live performances. One of us approached the other at a show – I forgot who asked who to do the split. But the situation ended up being pretty fucked up, because they didn't end up paying for any of the split, and they wouldn't buy any of the copies once they came out. They only wanted ten copies. Thankfully we ended up selling them all.

How has it been being on Saddle Creek?

It's great. I just hope that all the bands on the label stay with it. I know it's hard to resist other offers. We've gotten some offers from other labels but we let them know how happy we are with the label we're on now, and we don't talk about it much. Saddle Creek was called Lumberjack originally, but then Lumberjack Distribution showed up, so we had to change our name. Our whole group of bands was called the Saddle Creek bands to begin with... we all pooled our money together to put out the Slowdown Virginia album in 1994. Before that, it was just Conor's brother putting out tapes.

So all the bands on the label are friends? You all hang out together?

Yeah. Eight or so of us used to meet together and vote on what would be released, but it's turned into Rob running the label day-to-day and the rest of us just going along with him. We'd like more acts on the label, though... three's not enough. It's just us, Bright Eyes, and Cursive. Lullaby for the Working Class had an album recently but I'm not sure if they're around anymore.

Is that a choir of children singing on the last song on "Media"?

Yeah.

How did you get them?

We had to go around asking people if they could loan us their kids. We talked to some people who babysat for kids that age and other friends and relatives and put some people together.

Were they excited to be on an album?

I don't know. Actually the whole thing was a lot of work. I had to write the lyrics really big on these cards, even though the kids couldn't really read that well. And I had to explain the lyrics to the moms that were there... I ended up having to lie. It was very very strange.



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Janet Reno Is Not The Law!

Political Observations by Ross

Many people may say that I'm giving into my conservative side-- what little there may be of it. You can accuse me of becoming a Republican late in my life, although simply agreeing with one out of many faults Republicans find with the Democrats in power does not make me a conservative at all. Instead, it makes me an objectivist. I think my own political leanings are irrelevant. However, I think Attorney General Janet Reno is a disgrace to the American justice system and uses her office merely as a springboard for whatever incident she wants to dominate on any particular day. Here are a few reasons why I think Janet Reno is a failure at her position and is a testament to the utter disregard for the law that the entire Clinton-era has given us.

1) Waco, TX. Remember, those Branch Dividians, whose stories were pieced together in television movies? You know, they had that compound where they popped off a few guns each day, and, according to Ms. Reno, molested their children. There are a few things that bother me about the justice department and the ATF's handling of the matter. Firstly, the reports that children were being molested are wholly unsubstantiated and based on nothing more concrete than a bunch of rumors. Then again, Ms. Reno's entire tenure as the attorney general of Dade County, FL (Miami), was quite similar, often blowing the whistle on many a supposed child molester. Not that there's anything wrong with this, but a mere investigation into alleged child molestation is quite different than a Gestapo style assault on a compound fueled by only rumors of abuse and arms supplies. This is exactly what happened at Waco.

Now, after 7 years of Reno telling the powers that be that incendiary tear-gas bombs were not used in the attack on Waco, we suddenly find out that, yes tear gas was used and may have set the compound ablaze which led to the deaths of more than 80 people, including 20 children. So much for governmental protection. What strikes me as even scarier in this instance is that in all likelihood the FBI lied to Reno about whether or not they used incendiary tear gas. If this is so, isn't it a bit interesting that the chief executor of all that is the law in America would be swayed and lied to so easily by one of the branches of government she is supposed to oversee?

While famously proclaiming herself "accountable" for the disaster, which included the use of armored cars on the compound, she never admitted any error. She later presided over an internal investigation which resulted in a report that found no fault with anyone at the Justice Department or at the FBI, a conclusion contradicting the facts presented in the same document. But wait, there's more....

2) In addition to the legions of corruption in the Clinton administration (e.g. the Commerce Department being used to sell seats on foreign-trade missions in exchange for campaign cash; the Interior Department's inability to account for billions of dollars in American Indian trust money, and top appointees who were using their positions to conduct opposition research and disgrace members of Congress; the Energy Department becoming the plaything of the Red Chinese, who looted our nation's nuclear secrets at will; the Environmental Protection Agency that planted false evidence in a federal lawsuit for which two employees now have been indicted; the Treasury Department has set up a community-banking program that benefits longtime Clinton friends. Even the White House was used as a presidential fund-raising casino. Etc. Etc. Etc.), no government institution is more corrupt than Ms. Reno's justice department. For instance, why did she fire every single one of the 93 US attorneys as one of her first moves in office?

3) Okay, you knew it was coming: the Whitewater/Monica Lewinsky scandals that still have yet to be completely resolved. She dragged her feet in seeking the appointment of an independent counsel to investigate

the Whitewater scandal, and only did so after the president, remarkably, requested the appointment. Throughout the Paula Jones sexual-harassment litigation, Reno directed Justice Department attorneys to file briefs on behalf of the federal government in defense of Clinton's indefensible and unconstitutional immunity claims, which the US Supreme Court rejected unanimously.

Plus, for the last five years, Reno has attempted to undermine independent counsel Kenneth Starr's investigation by siding with Clinton on specious privilege assertions. Every court in which these claims were asserted dismissed them. And based on false allegations of payoffs to a key Whitewater witness, which were dismissed by Clinton's pals such as former senator David Pryor of Arkansas (who heads the Clinton legal-defense fund) and writers for the internet magazine *Salon* (which is funded largely by Clinton campaign contributors), Reno ordered an investigation of Starr's office and several of the president's critics. Then again, of course she's going to try to protect Bubba Clinton, seeing as how he gave her the job and he could freely take it away. Of course, no wrong doing was found.

4) Reno has impeded all serious attempts to investigate the Clinton-Gore campaign-finance scandal. She rejected the recommendation of FBI Director Louis Freeh and her former chief of the Campaign Finance Task Force, Charles LaBella, to seek the appointment of an independent counsel to investigate the matter. Reno's tortured reading of the since-expired Independent Counsel Act prevented an investigation of Vice President Gore's illegal fund raising from his White House office. She has repeatedly obstructed Congress' constitutional oversight authority with a classic lines like: "I'm damned if I do, I'm damned if I don't," "I won't talk about matters currently under investigation" and "I'll follow the facts and law wherever they lead."

5) Finally, the Waco-like storming of Elian Gonzalez's family's house, on April 23rd, in which pepper spray was shot in the face of Elian's protectors and loved ones. In this case she basically violated the 4th amendment and at the same time implying that she was the law. No, Ms. Reno, you are not the law, you merely enforce it. And enforcing the law in a raid on an unarmed family in the dead of night hoping that she and her boss would not get caught (unless, of course, and Associated Press photographer happens to be in the house at the time of Elian seizure) is wrong and unlawful.

So, call me a conservative or a Republican sympathizer. I'm not, though. Instead, I'm merely someone who follows the news very closely and is seriously dismayed with the work of a one-time governor from Arkansas and his 1992 campaign I supported whole-heartedly (even as a 15 year old). I think it is really too bad that in the case documented here Janet Reno should have investigated her own boss, the person who employs her, and I find stark similarities to this and the Watergate situation regarding presidential immunity and so forth. I feel that Ms. Reno hasn't handled much well in her career as the highest ranking law official in the nation, and that scares the hell out of me, because if the guilty go free while the innocent are attacked... then who's next?



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Marketing and Selling Your Band on the Internet

A Beginner's Guide

by Ross

Does this sound like you: you're a full time student and you play in a band. A damn good band, in fact, and when you do play—which is usually once every two weeks—kids seem to really like your band and have a good time. You have high aspirations for the outfit, but being a college student does not afford you nearly enough time to dedicate to music. With school or work seven days a week you do not have the resources to criss-cross the nation in hopes of gaining some sort of national or even regional following. Your band does not have much money so you cannot afford to pay for a good recording, much less release a record on compact disc format. Five years ago you may have been stuck in a rut. Five years ago your band would most likely go no farther than playing a few off-campus clubs or out of town shows (as long as they weren't more than 2 hours away) with little attention at all. However, as we firmly establish ourselves in Y2K things are looking a bit different. Now, there is a way for your band to garner attention, airplay, even fans all over the world with no more than the cost of a basic recording of your songs. That way involves the internet, and all you need is enough diligence and patience to search it in order to milk it for all your band is worth.

If this does sound like you there are perhaps thousands of people in your position. You want your music to be heard, but you do not think you have the resources to attain a wide spread audience. Fortunately for you there are 40 million plus people in America with online capabilities who could potentially give your band a listen. Although many people are quite adept at surfing the web

for pornography, or even downloading big-name artists' songs using programs like Napster (www.napster.com), they are not as savvy in the business aspects of the web—specifically the music business. This article should serve as a how-to guide for gaining more attention, and maybe even some fanfare, for any band with little or no money. Sure a lot of these steps may seem a bit elementary, but taken as a whole they can be very useful and give even the worst band a shot at fanfare.

Step 1: Creating a Personal Web Page

The first step in getting any band attention online involves a personal web page. In today's online world, the bulk of most people's internet knowledge is limited to using America Online. The thought of registering and building a web page sends nervous chills down even the most brilliant guitarist's spine. But, the task is not as daunting and arduous as it may seem. In fact, setting up a personal web page can be quite simple and at a basic level does not require anything more than a good word processor and some imagination.

For those musical outfits that do not have deep bank accounts, the idea of shelling out cash for a domain name and server space to host your website is not even a remote possibility. For you, there are various free web-hosting companies. Simply go to a site like GeoCities (www.geocities.com), fill out a few simple forms, and voila: instant web page. The only catch is that whenever anyone goes to your site, an annoying advertisement banner will follow them around. Hey, you're going low budget with this thing, it's just a start. Those that can afford the \$75 or so to buy a domain name and rent server space for at least a few months can go to one of hundreds of sites. There are more internet hosting companies popping up each day, and many can be quite different from one another. Before you jump onto the first one you find be sure to shop around and make sure you are getting the most for your money. For instance, compare each hosting company's added features: like CGI accessibility, amount of server space, maximum number of e-mail addresses, Front Page compatibility, etc. Don't worry, if these things sound arcane they will all come in time.

Once you have found a suitable hosting company you need to start building your web page. To construct an informative and interesting website one need not be a digital designer or know much about the internet. Instead, choose basic topics to include on your site and do not get too fancy or complicated with images and fonts faces. Some essential information on your site should be, of course, tour dates, a band biography, contact information, and a means to attain your band's recorded material. Additional topics can be scanned photographs, MP3s, show or record reviews, or links you think visitors may find helpful in finding out exactly what your band is about. An important concept to be aware of when building a site is not to give so much information that surfers feel inundated and intimidated thus get bored and leave. Keep it simple and to the point.

It is also quite comforting that some programs necessary for building sites can already be found on your computer. As a matter of fact, the program this article is being typed on can also be used to build a site from scratch. One does not need to go out and buy expensive construction utilities to create a simple, yet interesting site. Nor does one need to have had years of practice. Instead, getting to know the basic capabilities and functions of your particular program can be a very good start and send you well on your way to success.

Once you have a band website feel free to start publicizing the site. As soon as your band starts getting a following your goal is to have those fans visit the site regularly. This will allow anyone the ability to find out what the band is up to and how they can be a part of it. Never hesitate to place the URL of the site on posters or recordings. This will insure that fans will know where the site is and that it even exists.

A quick and easy way to gain attention for your site is by registering it with some of

the better known search engines on the web. The registration process for sites like Yahoo, Info Seek, Lycos, and Alta Vista is quick and painless and will allow you to increase the chances of people stumbling across your site. Simply go to your favorite search engines and look for a link that says something like, "How to Suggest a Site," or "Add a URL." Finding this option may take some searching but every search engine will have one. This can be very helpful, especially if someone inadvertently enters the style of music you play and the town in which you live into the search engine. Another quick and easy technique for generating a few hits can be to ask local clubs or bands to add your website as a link on theirs. It may seem a bit limiting, but you never know if your good friend's band will make it big, hence a lot of people may try their link to your site.

Step 2: Publicizing Your Band's Music on the Web

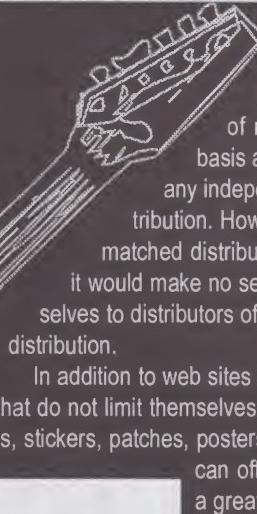
Once your site is firmly established in your local musical internet community and you begin to update it regularly, it will be time to think more globally. Head towards sites like MP3.com (www.mp3.com), Liquid Audio (www.liquidaudio.com), or E-Music (www.emusic.com) and check out their affiliate programs. Usually, this will entail filling out some simple forms—which can be downloaded directly from the site—that ask questions about the style of music you play, where you are based, and a few simple questions about your own site. There are relatively few guidelines, but read them carefully so you know exactly what you are getting and what you are not getting. The few conditions entail that you will be managing your own site and that you will prominently display the banner-link of the online music service you choose.

Once you agree to their terms of service, fill out the information form, wait 2 to 3 days and voila, you can begin to sell your music on the web and gain attention from all over the online world. Every one of the bigger internet sales sites will help you convert your recorded material into MP3s or a number of other formats. This will allow your fans to listen to songs on no matter what program they should use to do so. These sites usually have classification methods that will allow easy access to your songs. Thus, once an interested consumer hears your music—and likes what they hear—they can choose to purchase either computerized or compact disc format. The best part of the deal is that if you allow fans to purchase music through your own site, those sales will still be included in a monthly sales check sent to your very mailbox.

Sites like MP3.com do not even require that you have your own website. Instead, you can have your own personal page on their site where you can post the names of band members, record label, musical influences, how to buy the music, or contact information. Of course, this option will not allow you to get more in depth on the day to day happenings of your band, such as concert dates or a biography. For these things and more it is recommended that you maintain both your own site and your personal page on MP3.com.

Step 3: Distributing Your Music and Other Products

The MP3 format can be very helpful for fans not wishing to purchase a full album's worth of material or wanting to get a quick taste of what your band sounds like. However, if your band would like to gain further distribution for their hard-copy material, or would like to target a certain region of the nation, it can help to have distributors for your CD and vinyl music. At a beginning and do-it-



level the only road to go is the independent route. For this, you must surf the web a bit more to try to find online distributors willing to carry your style of music. As these distributors can pay on a consignment basis and do not require fees for stocking your material, almost any independent online distributor will consider your music for distribution. However, it is quite important that you do not choose a mismatched distributor for your audience and style of music. For instance, it would make no sense for your band, a heavy metal outfit, to market yourselves to distributors of blue grass. In this case there is such a thing as overkill distribution.

In addition to web sites that offer musical sales assistance, there are also many sites that do not limit themselves to the music. If your band has other merchandise—like T-shirts, stickers, patches, posters, etc.—they would like to sell there are many sites that can offer assistance in this area as well. Many companies do a great job of selling non-musical merchandise on their site on a consignment basis. Similarly, many of the online distributors you use will also have special features for non-musical items. This can be a great way of making some extra cash for the band or even generating some free advertising care of anyone who wears your T-shirt or patch. There is also nothing more flattering than walking into your favorite club and seeing someone you've never met before wearing your T-shirt. The only tough part is saving enough dough to make the item in question. However, once enough cash is generated from music sales this can be a fun way of supporting your band's musical habit.

Step 4: Get Online Already!

Again, it is very important to link every affiliate of your band's to your own site. This will allow the easiest access to your music and services for your fans. Remember, web surfers are fickle and have short attention spans. If they have to go searching all over cyberspace for your music they will eventually give up and move onto the next band.

So, now you've got a basic idea of what it takes to build up a strong local and national following for your band for relatively little cash. These ideas are merely a few of the increasing number of techniques used by bands and record labels all over the world to spread the word about their products. However, there are far more methods to choose from. But, with a little time and creativity you may find yourself playing guitar for the next Rolling Stones, although hopefully you won't go bankrupt as many times as they have. So get out there and do it already... you've got a lot of rock and roll ahead!

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 - > www.breakbeatscience.com
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- > www.insound.com
- > www.saulgoodman.com
- > www.southern.com
- > www.choked.com

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- > www.emusic.com
- > www.liquidaudio.com
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Botch

b y R O S S

We Are the Romans

Let's face it: the hardcore genre is filled with sound-alike bands who do nothing fresh or new. These bands think if they are technically proficient and use the right amount of distortion on their guitars then that's all there is to being a great. Then a band like Tacoma, WA's Botch comes along and blows everything else out of the water. Along with musical contemporaries like Coalesce and The Dillinger Escape Plan, Botch is taking a tired sound-- that of aggressive punk rock-- and making it new again. With weird as hell arrangements and crushing rhythms, Botch is truly doing their own thing. After learning a bit about the band's politics I was eager to sit down and talk with them. Especially after the release of their phenomenal new album, "We Are the Romans." Their bassist Brian and I recently sat down for a chat.

So, Brian, you just graduated college. Can you say something about that and maybe how it affects the band?

Well, I don't know. I was actually hoping that upon graduating we would do more touring, but we haven't really been able to practice consistently in the past year. So, we don't have any new songs written. We don't really like to tour unless we have a record or something to tour on. We do have a Japan tour that's supposed to happen at some point in time. We'll see what happens.

Where did you just graduate from and what did you study there?

The University of Puget Sound. I studied studio art with a minor in politics.

Do you do any of the artwork for Botch or is that just Dave Knudson?

Yeah, that's just Dave. I'm not very computer oriented, I'm more into painting. We'll see what happens, I may do some art for Botch in the future but as of yet I haven't done anything. I was actually going to major in politics for a while but you know how it is: a punk rock kid goes to college and thinks he knows everything about ideologies and idealism. It got to the point where I was a little disillusioned with everything and I decided that I really didn't believe in any certain political system with any great amount of conviction. If the world is ever going to improve the only way we can do it is by smaller communities. But I don't think there's really any form of legislation that can promote that.

I read some interview with you guys where you talked about how you really don't like it when bands act like they know everything about political theory and sociological history when in reality they only know how to run their mouths.

Yeah, we're not into that. As a band, we all have our beliefs and ideas but we never really agree on anything as far as that. So, we'd never really feel comfortable playing music about a political idea or ideas that we didn't all completely agree with. Similarly, no one has completely radical views on politics. Like, no one is a Marxist or anarchist or anything like that. I also don't think any of us have strong allegiance to democratic or republican views either. None of that. I think most people in the band are fairly well

informed but we just have a hard time coming to terms with what we really believe in.

You guys don't feel a need to spout political rhetoric?

No, so many bands do it and so few bands really follow through with what they talk about. I mean, when you first get into punk and hardcore you hear all these slogans thrown around and everyone's really passionate about everything. But, the more you learn about the scene and scene politics you see that there are a lot of vegans and people who recycle and stuff like that and it never really goes past that. It never really goes past "I don't eat animal products" or "I am ecologically sound." It doesn't mean that people should give up being political, it just means that if people are going to make really overt statements then they should back that up with knowledge. I can totally respect a band like Catharsis because they're actually trying to find an answer instead of just complaining about the problem. Even though I don't really agree with some of their ideas they do follow through with what they talk about, which is refreshing. They incorporate their ideas into their lives. I tend to be a very negative person and I find that it's a lot easier to negate ideas. There's not really anything I stand behind or believe.



I totally know what you mean. When I got into punk I heard all the slogans and ideologies calling for revolution and so forth. But, the more thought I gave it, the more I thought that the best way to change a society was to reform it and not necessarily destroy it.

Yeah, I agree. That's not to say that we're all not political in our own way, though. I try not to shop at chain stores. And, when you're on tour and there's nothing to eat but Taco Bell I try not to support any large chains, 'cause that's one thing I feel strongly about. I don't like seeing McDonald's all over the world. I'm pretty adamant about not having kids because I think smaller communities work better and we don't really need to add more people to the mix. There are things I do believe and I try and follow through on those, but I don't think there's a classification for my kind of beliefs. I guess I'm more personally political than outwardly so. There's specific things that people can do that I will always agree with. Like people being open-minded. I can stand behind that way of thinking all the time. I think when people get into really broad ideas they inevitably open themselves up to contradictory policies, which I think always happens.

But don't you think that's sort of why we all got into punk rock in the first place? I mean, if there were one set of views that everyone could stand by without any personal dilemma then we wouldn't need to have activism or even give much thought to the matter in the first place.

Yeah, that's my attraction to it. I guess for me I always thought I had the answers, and some of that was from what I learned through punk. It didn't take too long before I realized that Jello Biafra wasn't always right. And from what I hear he can be kind of a scum bag at times too. Okay, let's change the direction for a second. So, I heard you guys were asked to play in a porn film.

Yes. (laughter)

Would you care to expand?

Um, there's not really a whole lot else to say. We played a show in Canada and some skuzzy old guy came up to us with a business card and told us he wanted us to act—

Act?

Well, we wouldn't be naked but we'd be in the background while there was a lesbian scene going on. We turned him down since we were on tour.

Would you have turned him down if you weren't on tour?

You know, I don't know. He offered us a lot of money just to stand there and play. (laughter) I don't know. I don't have any deep seeded hatred towards the porn industry or anything. I'm gay, so I don't have any problem with gay pornography. It's not objectifying anyone except yourself, so if you don't have a problem with that then neither do I.

Did you know that Nathan from Boy Sets Fire came out of the closet?

Yeah, I heard there were some songs on the new album about that.

Really, I guess I wasn't paying atten-

tion hard enough. It's funny because a bunch of my girlfriends think he's so hot. Too bad for them.

Were you really surprised though?

Not really, but I don't like to pigeon-hole people like that. Anyways, Brian I heard that you streaked at a mall in Southern California.

Yeah, that was on the Ink and Dagger tour. That whole trip was basically about people out-doing each other. Pranks and lawlessness, you've heard it before.

Did you win?

I don't really know. It was up there but Ink and Dagger demonstrated some shoplifting skills that far surpassed that. There was some vandalism and a lot of shop-lifting. Ink and Dagger were trying to get away from their whole reputation as thieves. On that trip they were pretty good at keeping to gas stations and the Gap. Fight back at the system, that sort of thing.

Let's move onto music. I've heard you guys describe yourselves as "evil math rock."

I don't know if we really stick to that. It's something that came up and just kind of stuck.

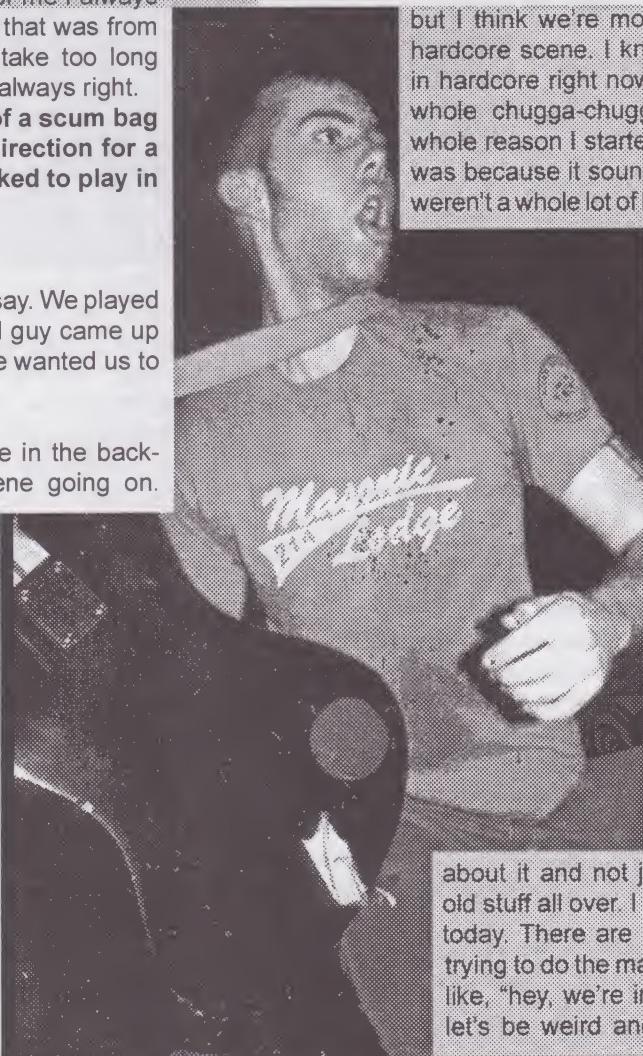
Okay, do you guys consider your style to be more metal or hardcore? And that may sound like a stupid question but for you guys I really am not sure.

Oh, I don't think we would consider ourselves a metal band at all. We all have our Neurosis and Slayer records,

but I think we're more firmly rooted in the hardcore scene. I know there's a big trend in hardcore right now to get away from the whole chugga-chugga thing. For me the whole reason I started listening to hardcore was because it sounded really fresh. There weren't a whole lot of bands that sounded like

Rorschach or Antioch Arrow, at least that I knew of. Coming out of simple pop-punk that was refreshing. It's really hard to push beyond what's already been done and hardcore just seemed to be more out there. With us, we're just trying to do that exactly. And, I think a lot of the Hydra Head bands are trying to do that as well. You know, trying to keep hardcore and underground music different so people can feel passionate

about it and not just think it's the same old stuff all over. I was thinking about that today. There are a lot of bands that are trying to do the mathy thing. You know it's like, "hey, we're in a hardcore band, but let's be weird and off-time too!" It's the



in thing. I don't necessarily think it's bad that so many bands are jumping on the bandwagon, so to speak, but I think the reason we did it and bands like Coalesce and Dillinger do it is because it's not something you're used to hearing. There's so much 4/4 going with so many power-chords that if we incorporate weird time-signatures then we're definitely pushing some sort of boundaries.

Is there a we-did-it-before-you sentiment?

No, I just think I'd like to hear other bands try to write riffs that you haven't already heard a million times before. I've heard people talk about how they're trying to get mathy. It's almost like it's exciting to play math-rock, or evil math rock as it were. It's cool to play in 7/8 or something, I guess.

Were people shocked when you first started playing?

No, it was a gradual thing. Even our first seven-inch opens with a riff in 5/4 and eventually we moved into even more challenging stuff. (laughter)

Is it true that you guys refuse to play bars?

Well, not necessarily bars, 'cause we play in bars all the time. But, we do not play twenty-one and over shows. This has actually come up a lot recently 'cause we just played a show in Oakland and the show was twenty-one and over. So, we went through the usual conversation of do we refuse to play or do we play to the ten people that were over twenty-one that would come see us play. I mean, we all feel that music is most poignant to kids and if we can't have kids-- the group that our music most directly affects-- come to our shows then we're not really going to have anyone come who's going to care, and we're not going to have anyone come at all period.

Speaking of being kids, you guys did a cover of "Rock Lobster" a while back. What were you thinking? (laughter)

It was a joke that we had been thinking about and we were going to put it on a comp. that someone had been bugging us about for a while. That comp. never really materialized but we had the song written anyway. It was pretty good and we thought it was really funny. When the "All About Friends" comp. was being organized we put "Rock Lobster" on that. We haven't played it in a long long time, although we may dig it out again.

When you do play it are people like: "Oh my God, they're playing the B-52s?" Or, are they generally positive?

Actually we get people yelling out for "Rock Lobster" all the time. It's kind of sad when people always yell out the cover songs you play. It's like your originals aren't good enough.

Okay, last question: is the Washington scene the next big hardcore scene?

Good question, I don't know. It has its ups and downs here. Undertow was pretty much the biggest band here when they were together. They broke up and Trial and Botch were around, but neither of us were very hip. We just sort of became the



hardcore scene after Undertow. For a while it was Botch and Trial who were the northwest hardcore bands of note. Nineironspitfire never really went anywhere and Kiss it Goodbye was never really that big in Seattle. I think they were bigger elsewhere. There's a lot of cool music coming out of Washington and Seattle but not much in the way of hardcore.

But, after the whole grunge thing, I think the world-- or at least my own little world-- is waiting for the next big thing out of Seattle.

Yeah, but a lot of people don't really know what's going on here at all and that's probably why the whole grunge thing was so weird. There's a lot of good indie rock, but not too much of it is hardcore. Us and Harkonen are basically the biggest bands here and we're not even that active right now. I don't know, I guess if Seattle is going to have its day in the sun again, it sure as hell won't be in math rock. (laughter)

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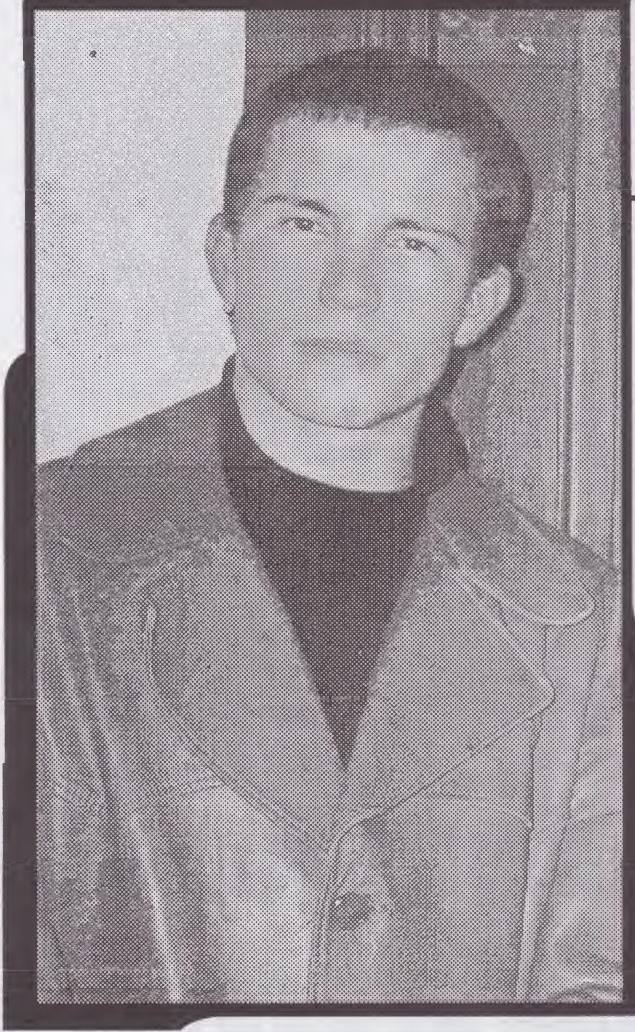
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Nick Powers

International Man of Mystery

semester, I had the flu, and bad. I'm sure everyone knows the kind of illness I'm talking about so, I won't go into detail on the symptoms, but I was absolutely miserable.

But the worst was yet to come. After I was more or less cured, one of the residual effects was a severely sore throat that all but prevented me from talking. This silence seemed interminable, and it ended up lasting three weeks. That's three weeks of otherwise daily routine life, all forced to occur under a huge guise of involuntary silence.

It was absolutely maddening. The first three weeks of classes and I was in essence mute. To make matters worse, I had mostly small classes this semester with lots of discussion, and it was absolute torture to be unable to contradict the intellectual types who love the sound of their own voice. My identity in classes quickly became that of the kid who never talked. After a month-long break where I didn't see my good friends, the return-to-school conversations of "how have you been, how was your break?" were painfully short (I, like everyone else, used to hate these conversations, but believe me, you miss them when you have no choice). I also ran into the girl who I hadn't quite dated as the previous semester was ending and could only nod my head helplessly as she told me to call her when I could talk again. After a couple weeks of this miserable pseudo-life, I plunged into a depression the severity of which has been surpassed by only my worst relationship break-up (although admittedly I haven't had that many bad break-ups).

And, it was actually my own frustration at being stripped of the power to communicate that prolonged my condition. Rather than accept my silence, I would manage a nearly inaudible whisper or force this strange, breathy, raspy voice that did not at all resemble speech. But any vocal projection at all would be so damn painful, and last only a couple seconds. And, as most medical professionals will tell you, whispering is a strain on

Last December, after a very uneventful Friday night - same party as every weekend, same kids at every party, etc., I cracked. This insane panic led me and three friends to a beautiful moment of spontaneity which lasted only a few hours, but that was long enough. That was enough time to induce us to make a pledge. In yet another end-of-college crisis the likes of which all LOI columnists seem to be experiencing lately, we pledged that in the spring semester of 2000, our last four months all together, we would do whatever it took to make every weekend memorable.

So a month or two later, as this fateful semester was to begin, I should have been prepared for an event that would make the next few weeks most memorable. All of our friends were back in town, the weekend (which ended up being, you guessed it, unmemorable) was over, classes had started. But I got sick, and within 24 hours of the start of the new



your vocal cords and only extends the muteness and accompanying discomfort. I think they're right.

I did find little sources of minor consolation, but they were all only temporary. I had read a lot of Steinbeck over break, so I first fashioned myself as a character you might find in one of his novels - silent, stoic, communicating all that needed to be said with a mere nod of the head or change in facial expression. But it didn't work, basically because I like to express myself much more than that was allowing. Some of my house-mates indulged me and would carry on lengthy conversations where they would talk and then patiently wait for me to write out what it was I had to say. But this was still taxing, and I felt kind of like I was handicapped and the object of some condescension. An even more absurd and entertaining development was my whistle method of conversation, where a friend of mine would ask me a question (preferably one with only a couple possible answers) and I would whistle, in mimicry of speech, my response. We got frighteningly good at it, but it soon lost its effectiveness and became more of a circus trick. E-mail was no better, just because of its lack of immediacy. The message I got from my mom telling me that I should have gotten flu shots in the first place really didn't help either.

I did get into physical greetings as well, and they were really nice - just about everyone indulged that need too, with very few people afraid of my microbes that had long since become harmless. But the contrast between a big enthusiastic handshake, hug, or even kisses on the cheek and the non-conversation that followed was pretty disconcerting. One really comic scene remains in my mind: I saw a friend on campus from a good distance and he yelled "Hey Powers!" (I don't get the last name thing either). I responded with a big ol' wave and when we got close enough, a hearty handshake.

"Still can't talk?" he asked. I nodded no.

"That sucks." I nodded yes.

"Hope you get your voice back soon". I gestured my appreciation for his kindness, but I was left unfulfilled by the conversation.

So what's the meaning of all this whining, you ask? Well there's no real moral, because I got my voice back, and reverted back to the same fortunate, happy, healthy life that the first three and a half years of college most frequently resembled. And, predictably, our pledge was forgotten and most of the weekends, especially from the early part of the semester, ended up blending together - and now it's my silence rather than adventurous weekends with good friends that will remain one of the prevalent memories of my final semester in college. I'm not trying to impart some "Now I approach life differently..." kind of wisdom, or say that "Once you lose the power of communication for a little while, you realize...." I just wanted to let you know how much it sucked.

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Jimi Cheetah

by Ross

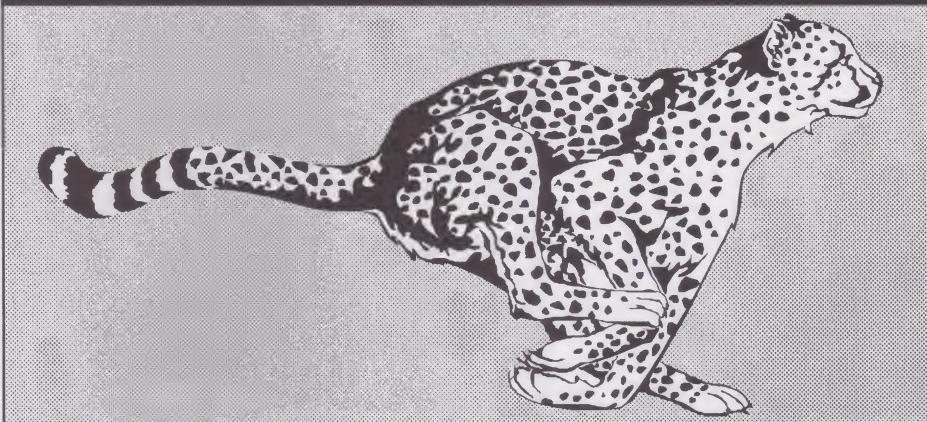


Like others we've interviewed in the past, Jimi Cheetah has had almost every easily visible position in punk rock. Whether playing in the luminary East Bay hardcore outfit, Screw 32, or the Bay Area staple, Tilt, he has managed to rock in the house in some way. In addition, he is an active staff member of the two biggest new San Franicso fanzines, Hit List and Shredding Paper; not to mention the up-and-coming Cheetah's Records. Unlike others we've interviewed, Jimi is the only do-it-all punk icon that I not only watched in awe on many a Saturday night in my teenage years, but can also be found regularly at the best record store in the world where he works. I recently had a chance to sit down with Jimi at All You Knead in San Francisco for tuna melts and nostalgia.

Jimi, if anyone is qualified to answer this question it's you: so, how's the San Francisco scene doing these days?

Well, it's still doing pretty well—as it always is—but it's getting harder and harder for newly formed bands to make it in the Bay Area right now. There are so few clubs that book punk shows now and those that do are hesitant to book bands that don't have big names. Unfortunately, most of the punk bands that do play at clubs like The Bottom of the Hill and even Slim's are all bigger bands from out of town. And, since the Cocodrie is closing—which is really the only club in the city of San Francsico that regularly books local shows—there really aren't a whole lot of places for bands to play here period. The good thing, I think, is that kids are starting to look back to Gilman Street for their weekly dose of punk rock. I mean, I think every town where there is some punk scene goes throw stages like a roller-coaster: really vibrant, active periods with lots of amazing bands and kids going to shows; and times when there aren't a lot of places to play. The thing about the Bay Area is that there are and have always been tons of kids who listen to indie rock and come out to shows, and there really haven't been a whole lot of places for new bands to play to begin with. Yet, I think the Bay Area scene has lots of great bands who are going to remind people that there's more to punk here than Green Day and Rancid. To make a long story short, it's still good—we're still here, and we're still ready to rock—although others around the country may have forgotten about us for a while. But, geez, having American Steel in any town's musical world makes it a scene I want to be in. Those guys are set to explode!

Cool, good to hear. I feel like I'm not as in touch with what's going on here musically since I live on the east coast now. Anyways, my first real question for you: is it getting harder to stay involved in punk rock now that you're married, have a kid, and may not be as young as most of people into punk around here? First off, I'm definitely not as young as the rest of the kids around here, or anywhere there's a punk scene for that matter, but if anything I'm just as into it as I ever was. My wife and I write for Hit List and Shredding Paper, I have my label, not to mention I work at arguably the best record store in the world, Amoeba Records, here in SF. It is getting harder to go to shows on a regular basis, though. I don't get to nearly as many shows as I did when I was younger, not to mention when I played in bands and would tour for months out of the year. But, working at a record store alone lets me hear all the new music that



comes out, and I hear pretty much everything else from writing reviews for those zines. I mean, I did over a hundred reviews for one issue of Shredding Paper a while back! If anything, I'm more in touch with what's going on in punk rock than I ever was.

Is your daughter into punk? I mean, does she ever wander over when you're reviewing a record and ask you what those people are so angry?

(laughter) Well, we're trying to get her musically inclined. As you might have guessed, music is a big part of our lives. I'm a big record collector and we've always got instruments lying around all over the house, so it's inevitable that she's going to become accustomed to loud guitars. For right now I think she's a bit more into the Muppets than NOFX, but we'll see in a few years. (laughter)

Let's talk about your previous bands. First of all, is it true that the term, "East Bay Hardcore" was completely made up by Screw 32 and AFI?

Yeah, when I was in Screw 32 AFI was starting to get big in the Bay Area at the same time. Both our bands didn't really fit into any of the scenes here. I mean, neither of us really fit the Lookout! sound or the Mission sound. At the same time, both our bands weren't quite punk as we had a bit of harder and faster edge than bands like 15 or Mr. T

Experience, for instance. So, we wrote "East Bay Hardcore" on the back of our t-shirts and it stuck. It was actually a big joke, but then you got bands like Powerhouse morphing it into "Oakland Brand Hardcore." It's not really that big a deal, but we just thought it was funny at the time and it stuck. There really has never been a very big hardcore scene in the Bay Area, at least not compared to the punk-pop or indie scenes. So, it was sort of our way of saying, "Hey world, take a look at us, we don't sound like Green Day!" (laughter)

Maybe the world knows the answer to this, but I really have no idea: why did Screw 32 break up?

Um, let's just say "unresolved childhood issues." (laughter)

You've used that one before. (more laughter)

Oh yes, it's me being clever. Anyways, we just were fighting more than having a good time. We weren't doing it for fun anymore and we were taking it way too seriously and blah blah blah. You know, the same story that kills any band. After our second record on Fat Wreck we just decided to go our own ways. I'm still friendly with those guys, so it's no big deal now.

So, how did you end up playing for Tilt?

Well, I knew Cinder and Jeff from Cinder Block [the Bay Area's premier punk merchandise company]

because Screw 32 had them make our T-shirts. They just happened to be looking for a bassist literally the same week that Screw 32 broke up. They asked me if I wanted the job, I wasn't doing anything at that point, and I accepted.

Why did you quit that band?

Well, I got married and had a daughter is why. I've never been the type of person to go on tour for half the year and leave my family at home. So, I settled down and got a nine to five job. (laughter) Cinder and the rest of the Tilt people are so great, but you can only tour for so many years, you know.

Tell me how Cheetah's Records started.

Well, I sold my bass cabinet after I finished up in Tilt and had a few hundred dollars to spare. So, I asked my friends in United Blood to put out a seven inch as my first release.

Didn't Tim Armstrong play for them for a while?

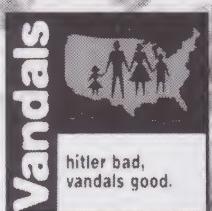
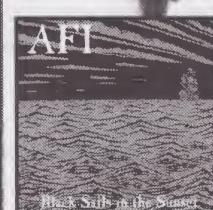
Well, he played bass for Special Forces, but you're half right 'cause Orlando X, was the singer for both bands. That was a long time ago. If any of your typical Rancid fans heard United Blood I don't think they'd like it too much because it's Oi. But, I love it. I was actually pretty spoiled by that release since it sold like three-thousand copies. So, with the money I made from that record I took it and made some more. I recently put out a full length by Black Cat Music, who are a great rock and roll band with Spock haircuts; and a Tantrums record among other things.

Any future plans for the label?

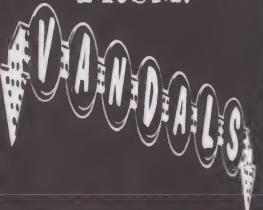
Yeah, get paid from my distributors. (laughter) No, I'm just going to keep on putting out music I like and try to help out my friends. If other people like it, then that's all I can ask for.

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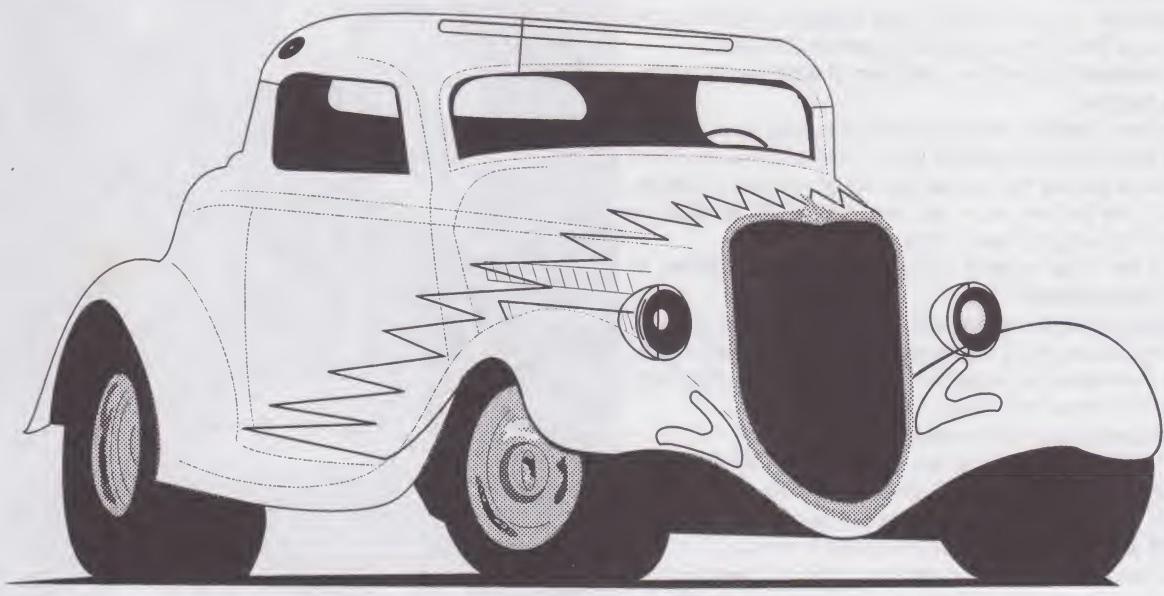
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hot rod circuit

by Ross

Not only does Hot Rod Circuit have possibly the coolest band name I've heard in a while, it is also a great band. Combining pop hooks with punk textures, Hot Rod Circuit has created a huge buzz for itself in almost no time at all. After moving from the indie-rock wastelands of the South to the greener pastures of the Northeast, they have really hit their stride, which comes as no surprise because they rock the house. Between touring and putting out fantastic records, it's a wonder their guitarist/singer, Andy, had any time to talk with me at all. But he managed to find the time, and he's a really great guy. He told me about the move from Alabama, getting record deals thrown at him, and what the best drink at a Hot Rod Circuit show is. Catch this band before you find yourself unhip.

So, why did you guys move from Alabama to Connecticut?

We wanted to move somewhere with a better location and musical scene going on. We decided we were either going to move up to California or somewhere close to New York. We ended up having some family up here that said we could crash with them until we got situated.

How do you like it?

It's awesome. It's so much better than Alabama in that the scene rocks here. Well, there's not much of a scene in Connecticut.

But Hatebreed is from there, and I sort of think you sound like them. (laughter)

Sometimes (laughter), but the area has lots going on in terms of music that we like and that we fit in with. There's more cities around like Boston and New York and the kids here go to shows. In Alabama you can play the same venue and there might be fifty kids there or ten, and it's always the same people.

Why is the scene so much better up here than in Alabama, in your expert opinion?

I think they're exposed to it more here. On the East coast and West coast you have more of a club scene and more shows, whereas in the South it was always house parties. All the clubs that were in the area we lived in went under in a week or two.

Are there not many indie bands in Alabama?

Well, I don't mean to get down on Alabama 'cause we grew up with Man or Astroman and the Quadrajets and those bands fucking rock! But, those bands had money to start out with because of their label or whatever, so they had connections in order to get noticed and heard. We didn't and we didn't quite fit in with the other stuff there so we left. But, just for the record not everyone in Alabama listens to country music and wears cowboy hats. There are a good deal of cool people there. But, once we moved up here we had a booking agent and a label after like 3 months, which is incredible. Things just sort of blew up once we got here.

But, you guys also tour a lot.

Oh, we tour tremendously. If anybody deserves anything we definitely do.

You guys are leaving for a tour with Piebald in a few days, how's that going to be?

I can't wait to go. Those guys are so cool. The tour is called "Drunk and Stoned in Your Town" if that gives you any idea of what it's going to be like. They also draw a very similar crowd to ours so it should be a whole lot of fun.

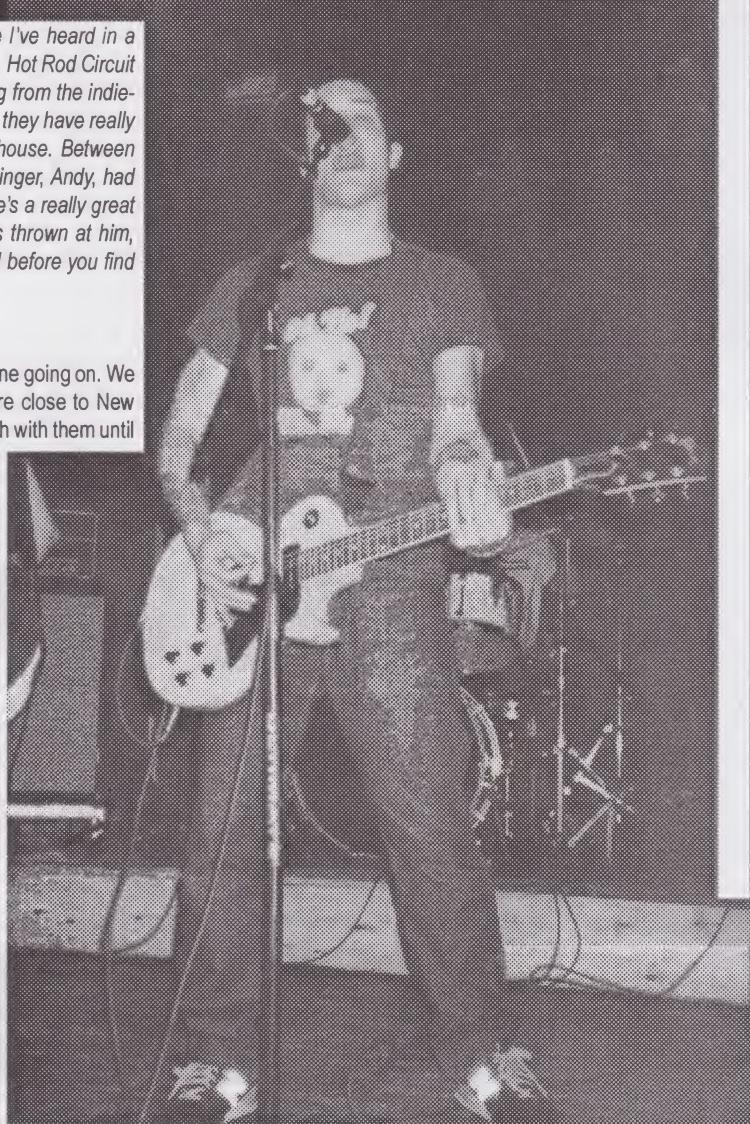
So, how is it touring being married and all?

Well, I'm married and I also have 3 daughters....

3 daughters?!

Yup, seven year old twins and a two-and-a-half year old. Anyhow, it's not that bad. I work my ass off when I'm at home and right now the band's doing well so we're getting by. I usually come back with some money, but I basically cram. My family is really cool with the band thing, though. They know I love this and they know it's my life so they understand. I would love to get to the point where we did make a little money and didn't have to tour 8 months a year. But, my wife knew what she was getting into before we got married. She actually used to play bass for us, but then we had kids so we agreed that she would take care of the kids. She's amazing!

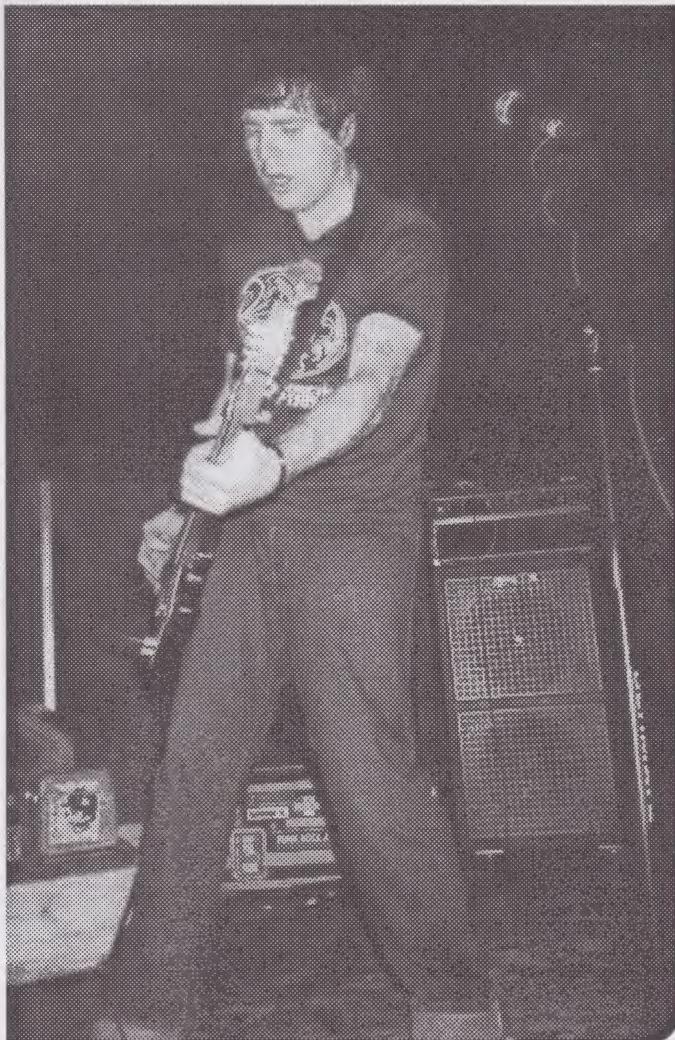
How did you guys get hooked up with Triple Crown—being that the general sound of their roster is quite different than you guys?



Well, we had a show with this band called Lounge and Roy from that band really liked us and told us he had this friend named Andrew Ellis who would totally dig us. He told us that Andrew books for the Getup Kids and some other bands. So, the very next day Andrew called us and told us he liked our songs and asked if we wanted to play two shows with the New Rising Sons. So he booked a show with them in New Haven and New York City and we were supposed to meet him when we went to New York. Of course, they cancelled the show in New Haven and when we drove to New York the show was cancelled there as well. (laughter) We played anyway with some other bands and he talked to us and really liked us. He's good friends with Fred from Triple Crown so he hooked us up with him. So, we're basically on Triple Crown and Montalban Hotel which is Andrew's own label. He's put out some Jejune 7's and some Garden Variety stuff, so he's knows what he's doing. Andrew is also our booking agent so we get lots of cool shows through him. As far as the roster goes, in terms of bands like 25 Ta Life and all the ska bands like the Stubborn All Stars, I kind of feel that we get a little bit of respect for it in a way, because since we're a pop band—or however you want to classify us—I think people think it's pretty cool that we're on such a diverse label.

So you have one more record to do with them?

Yeah, we've had a few offers from labels like Vagrant, who are pretty much giving offers to the entire indie rock community right now (laughter), and we're seriously considering that, but as of right now we've got one more record to do for Triple Crown. I mean, that's basically the next level, you know. Triple Crown is awesome, but being on Vagrant is basically as professional as a punk band can get



without selling their souls. (laughter)

On a completely different note, what do you think is going to be the dominant trend in indie rock in the next few years?

Well, I really see rock and roll coming back. I mean, at work today all that was on was Third Eye Blind and Blink 182 and those bands, even though they're not that great, are rock bands. So, even on that level you have rock coming back over, say, the Backstreet Boys or even all the techno stuff out today. In indie rock, you basically have the emo thing that's blown up and is really wearing out its welcome, if you know what I mean....

Oh I do, only too well, Andy. (laughter)

I mean, when I thought of emo when I was growing up it was more along the lines of Drive Like Jehu, not stuff like the Getup Kids, who are totally a pop band, not an emo band. We're just a rock band. We may have some emotional parts, but we're pop-rock, or pop-punk or what have you. Everything is classified as emo nowadays, like 5 years ago it was all about alternative. Everything on the radio 5 years ago was alternative and Limp Bizkit isn't an alternative to much. (laughter)

So, what's with the song name "Ache Breaky Hockey Haircut"?

Oh yeah, mullets. You know, just growing up in Alabama and stuff like that. There are tons of mullets there, but the thing with mullets is that they're everywhere. In the north there are actually more in my opinion. I think everyone's self-conscious in Alabama 'cause they're all hillbillies, so they try not to look like hillbillies. Up here, people aren't as concerned with not looking too much like a redneck so it may not be as weird if they have a mullet. Although they still are very weird....

(laughter)

Have you been to that mullet website?

No, but someone just told me about it. It sounds awesome (laughter). It's funny 'cause most of our songs have titles that don't even fit the lyrics of the song, we just think they're funny. Like "Irish Car Bomb" is the name of our favorite drink. And, the lyrics of that song are basically about our bass player smoking cigarettes in our van even though nobody else smokes.

Oh wow, I thought that line, "you know you taste like cancer," was about kissing a girl who smoked or something.

I always like to write lyrics that can seem like they mean a bunch of things. Like it could be about a girl you kiss that smokes, and that really sucks if you've ever done it, or it could mean that me and our bassist are very close. (laughter) He thought it was really funny.

So, what's in an Irish Car Bomb?

Half a glass of Guinness and then you take a shot glass half filled with Jameson's Irish Whiskey and Bailey's Irish Cream. Then you drop the shot glass in the beer and you down the whole thing. It's incredible.

And, it's possibly the most Irish drink I've ever heard of! As if those three drinks weren't Irish enough on their own. (laughter)

Yeah, if we didn't keep on ordering those drinks we'd come back with so much money. Jay's the resident alcoholic in the band, so he can usually be found at the bar.

Andy, in ten years after Hot Rod Circuit has blown up and then faded, what do you think you'll look like and what will you be doing?

Hmmm, well, I'll probably be bald and have a huge beer gut and smell and have lots of stupid tattoos. Much like what I look like now. (laughter)

Yeah except you guys are possibly the most malnourished band I think I've ever seen. You dudes are so fucking skinny.

That's true. Okay... I'll be bald, skinny as fuck, and have lots of tattoos. (laughter) I don't know, I'd like to keep this band going as long as we can, and then maybe I'll do something like a record label. I want to remain involved in music forever. The tough part about playing punk rock is that you really can't do it past a certain age. I mean, no one wants to see some 50 year old rocking out in his hardcore band, ya know? Plus there really aren't that many kids into indie rock in America to be able to make a really good living after you stop touring so much. There are kids into Blink 182 all over, but that's really another level. I think the Getup Kids are about as big as an indie rock band can be.

Didnt you guys just get a new drummer?

Well, our old drummer quit after the last tour we did with the Anniversary. So, we're looking for a full time replacement.

Are there hard feelings?

Unfortunately, I have to say there are. We feel kind of betrayed. I mean, we understand that this lifestyle of being on the road is trying, but we all went into this together knowing what it was going to be like, so we sort of feel let down. I mean, here he ups and quits right as we're about to go back out and we don't have a drummer. So we've been playing with Dan from Lazycain and he's awesome. As far as it's going now, we're probably going to go with this guy named Mike who plays in a band called The Shyness Clinic.

Oh no!

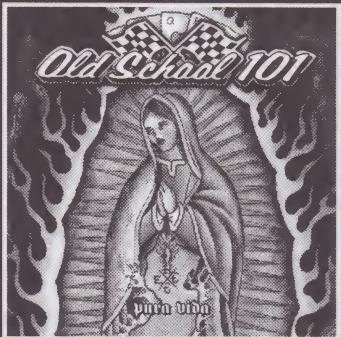
Yeah, I'm not that into them either and we were really skeptical, but he's a rocking drummer. I actually got the recording and I didn't even want to try him out. But, he came down to play with us and he fucking smoked, so as far as I know he's gonna be the drummer from here on in after we get back from the Piebald tour.

Okay, finish this sentence: "If I knew now what I knew then I would...."

Oh God, no one's asked us that yet and I guess it was just a matter of time before someone did [Hot Rod Circuit's latest album is of the same name.] Hmmm, I guess I would be more prepared to answer your questions. (much laughter) That's probably not what you were hoping for but there's really no deep underlying principal to our band that explains that album title. We just thought it was appropriate. It really has two references, though. The first one is a getting stoned kind of thing. (laughter) You have to get stoned a lot to understand. The second reference is to me and my wife. We were going through a hard time around then and it was about getting her back. We were separated and now we're cool so that's it.

Hot Rod Circuit can be reached at hotrodcircuit@bigfoot.com

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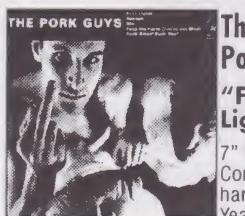
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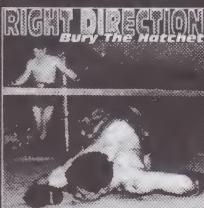
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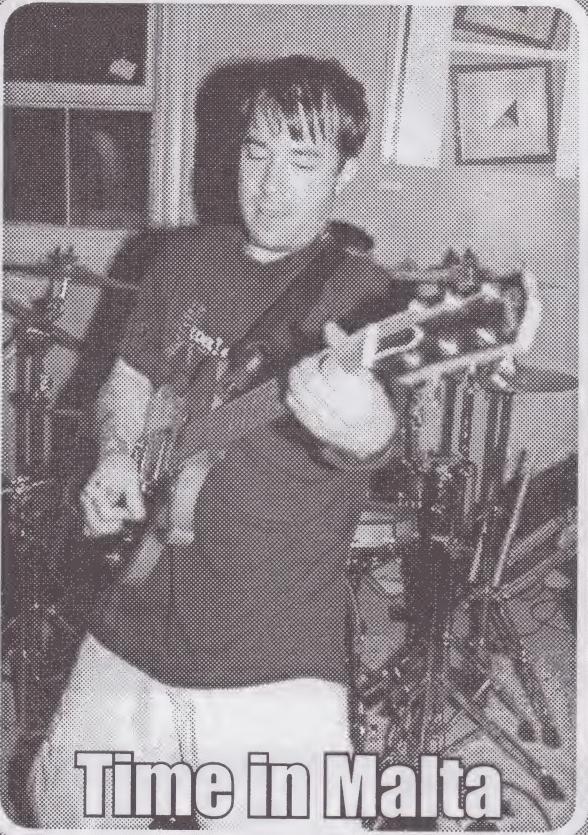
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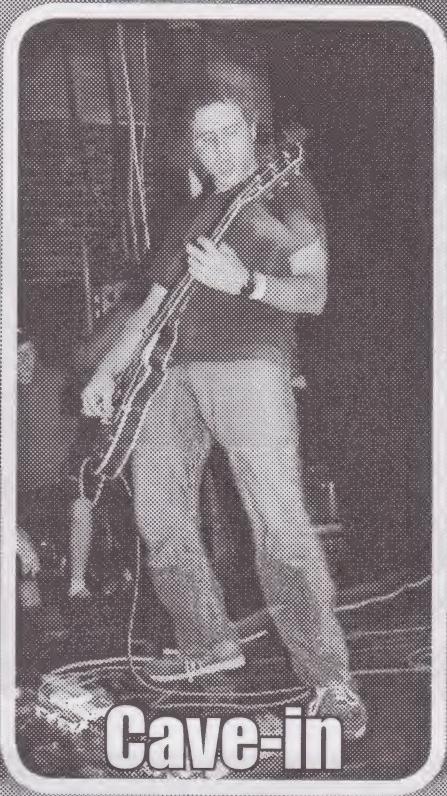
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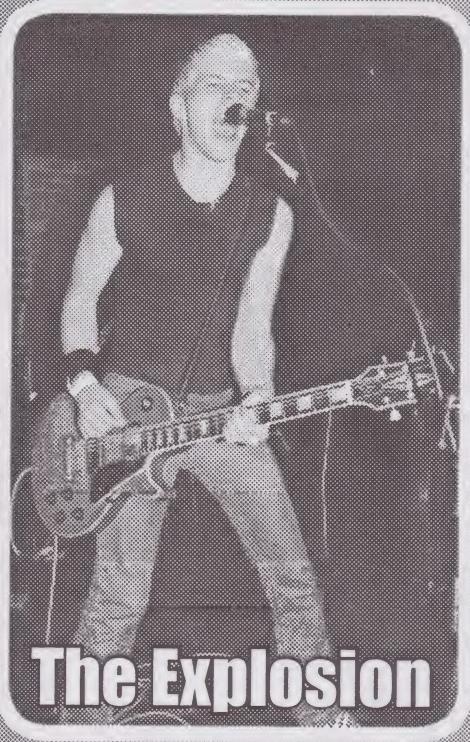
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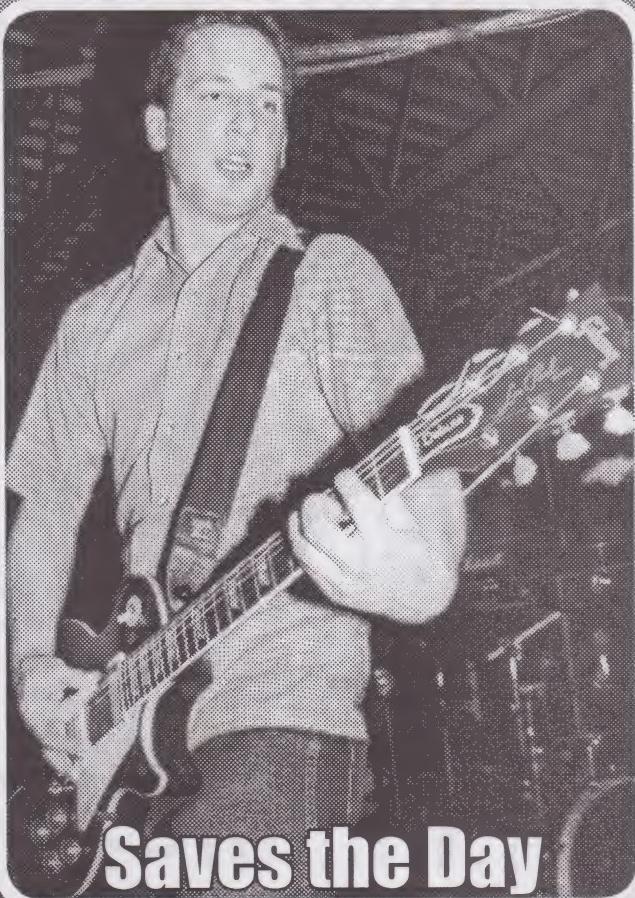
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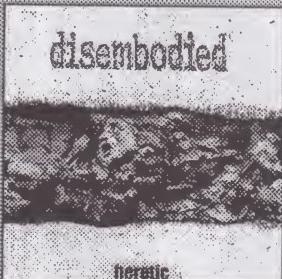
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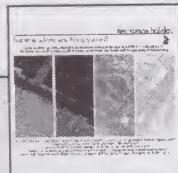
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Zine Reviews, yo!

Counter Theory #2 (\$2 newsprint)

In the world of music zines there are really only three paths any publication can follow: 1) they can suck from the get-go and never really get better. Unfortunately too many zines suck for 5 or 6 issues before quitting instead of trying to get better edition by edition. 2) they can suck from the beginning and slowly learn the ins and outs of music criticism and writing in order to get better. Something I like to think *Law of Inertia* has done. 3) or, they can be good from the start and have little room for improvement. As you might have guessed, very few zines adhere to the third path, and how boring would that be? I mean, isn't half the fun of doing a zine watching it progress? But, *Counter Theory* is a zine that after releasing an unremarkable first issue is really getting their shit together in a hurry. Not only are there over 15 interviews in here, all fairly well done I might add, but there are more reviews (and unfortunately ads) in this zine than in any second issue I've ever seen. My two comments are that they really haven't mastered the art of the review yet in that often times more writing leads to more descriptive commentary, and that the layout is so lo-fi it almost hurts (be wary of taking images off the web guys). Nonetheless, if this is what *Counter Theory* looks like after two issues, it won't be long before *Law of Inertia* has a serious run for its money. (12850 St. Rd 84 Davie, FL 33325) RS

(em) #14 (\$2 newsprint/ color cover)

I reviewed a copy of this zine that I got at a Boy Sets Fire show in the last issue and I remember being rather impressed. The writing is thoughtful and interesting, the interviews-- while short-- are clearly well-informed and excited about the music, and the design is so simple it's quite eye pleasing. Furthermore, I really like the politics conveyed by the editor, a guy who calls himself Rev. Jered. From what I gather, each issue of (em) has a theme. I tend to think that having a theme simply for the sake of connecting the content can get a bit troublesome, and even cumbersome, but it can make each issue very cohesive which is always a plus. While their last issue's theme was violence, this one switches to that of food. I understand their argument that food and issues thereof are inherently political-- such as starvation, body image, and animal slaughter-- and many of the columns tended to be really fascinating. However, in the interviews with Botch, Stratego, Piebald, and Endgame questions like: "what's your favorite food" got old real quick. Nonetheless, the columns written by Ian from EVR and Ashley DeForest, as well as the interview with Shannon Stember made this issue a quick and worthwhile read. (PO Box 14728 Portland, OR 97293-0728) RS

Endwell #1 (offset paper)

This issue of *Endwell* is about a year old, which makes me wonder why they would send it in for review. Nonetheless, it's not bad for a first issue. However, there is a first rule of music zine writing that I feel I should impart on these lads from Long Island: columns, reviews, and interviews only does not a good zine make. The interview with Boy Sets Fire was very well done and shows what thoughtful and inspiring musicians those guys are. Plus it showed that even hardcore bands have sensitive sides as well. Heh heh. The Midvale interview was short and sweet. Other than that the Nora, Glassjaw, and Movielife interviews were a bit confusing and silly, but I think that's more a factor of the editor not quite mastering the art of the interview (and then the most important task of shaving away the bullshit from the in-between-questions banter that happens in every interview). But, other than some music stuff that's all there is. I need more kids, what do I do if I don't really care who the hell Bridgewater is? Overall, I think this is a good start, surely a hell of a lot better than the first issue of my humble magazine, but could badly use a spell-checker and perhaps a better graphic designer to spice up the boringly simple layout in this thing. Ah, how I love seeing immature zines (and I don't mean that in a bad way). They remind me where *LOI* came from and exactly what we desperately need

to get better. (228 Oak Street New Windsor, NY 12553) RS

Establishment (xerox/colored paper-- half size)

This is a totally new one to me and, from what I've seen, a completely different take on what zines are about. It's no secret that I have a soft spot in my heart for non-musical zines. Very few music zines-- including mine, some might argue-- have anything new to say. And who wants to read 75 pages about boring punk rock anyway? So, here we have Lore and Streeter (cool names, no?), two kids obviously so in love it almost hurts for me to read about the bond they share. Basically this zine is 10 or so short pieces about how these two came together and what it's like to be totally and madly and passionately crazy about one another. I must admit, I found parts of this thing quite sexy and beautiful, and it's written in this very light and dreamy sort of style. My other impression is that I've never been this in love and don't know if I ever will be. I mean, how many people can say they have had someone in their lives who can "simply touch you without any sexual intention and your body still trembles out of sheer delight"? I'm going to go suck now. (PO Box 33 Glen Haven, CO 80532) RS

Filterlanes #1 (xerox- half size)

Well, I think this is my introduction to the zine world of Singapore and I'm a bit disappointed to find out that zines from the Pacific Islands are pretty damn similar to those from America. Hell, this one's even written in English. I really feel that zines should be a way to let those in your scene know what you're thinking at a really grassroots level, and, I don't know how many kids in Singapore speak English, but this one is obviously trying to attract a broader focus. I mean, they only interview two bands from Singapore and all the ads and most of the reviews are from American bands and labels. I guess I shouldn't be so upset over this, especially since the kid that does it, Zu Boon, seems pretty cool and has nifty adventures, but at the level this zine is at, I wish he would focus more on getting in touch with his immediate scene rather than tackling the beaten-to-death scene of America from across the world. (Zu Boon Robinson Road Post Office PO Box 343 Singapore 900643 Singapore) RS

Hanging Like a Hex #13 (\$2 newsprint/color-glossy cover)

Ah, the new issue of *Hanging Like a Hex*, a zine that is *LOI*'s only real competition in upstate New York as far as punk and hardcore are concerned. Don't worry Ryan, I'm moving to the city so you have upstate all to yourself once again. I've been amazed by the the amount this zine has improved in the last two issues. Prior to that I always thought of *HLAH* as that zine that covered the Syracuse hardcore scene interspersed with a few indie acts from around the nation. I never thought it was anything special, just that it had been around longer than most hardcore zines from the Northeast. Now, I really look forward to *Hanging Like a Hex*, as I feel they cover a side of hardcore that most other zines refuse to touch, specifically the metal side. This issue has very well done articles on the booking agent phenomenon in punk, the current state of the Mumia Abu-Jamal situation, flyer art as well as interviews with the Dismemberment Plan, Cause for Alarm, Drowningman, and others. One thing I think may be a drawback to *HLAH*'s new look and feel is that they now cover bands that have already been covered a lot in the underground media like Rainer Maria, but the interviews with Burn it Down, Coalesce, and Fall Silent more than make up for that. Extra points for having some really informative record reviews. It's good to see that at least one zine has well-researched reviews. Pick this up. (201 Maple Ln. N. Syracuse, NY 13212) RS

Hit It Or Quit It #15 (\$2.50 newsprint/ color cover)

I've said it once and I'll say it again: *Hit it or Quit it* may not be the best zine for those looking for a punk rock bible, but it is possibly the most hip, fashionable magazine in indie rock. Not only does Ms. Hopper love interesting and groundbreaking music, something that one may not always be able to say

about *LOI*, but she has an ear for what is in style and what should be in style that leaves most magazines in the prosaic dust. There's something about the arrogant attitude of the zine's writers, like Steve Dude for example, that one can't help feeling intrigued and at times turned on. The artwork is always clever, if not the most eye friendly, the interviews are always quirky, and features like "The Locust: The Worst Band on Earth?" make this zine insightful and fun as hell. So, if you, like me, long to enter the pantheon of hip and trendy indie-rock stardom with a bullet, then please pick up this great work of literature. (PO Box 14624 Chicago, IL 60614) RS

Intox #4 (newsprint)

To be perfectly honest, I merely skimmed through the interviews in this issue of *Intox*, not because they're low quality (although I've seen better), but because most of them are with bands like Jets to Brazil and the Get Up Kids that have already been interviewed to death by every other zine on the face of the planet. Instead I skipped to the more personal and political writing included in the zine, which I found more interesting. Of particular note is editor Robin Reichhardt's piece "Seven Days," which is essentially a transcript of a week's worth of diary entries. Robin is not the first person to include deeply personal writing in his zine, of course, but by formalizing it into a chronological account of a week in his life, he's giving it a new twist. It's always fun to get a sneak peek into someone else's thoughts and this is no exception. I also enjoyed the zine's short fiction pieces, which, while not exactly mind-blowing, were nonetheless able to steer well clear of the dreaded atrocious-zine-poetry trap that larger magazines like *Flipside* have fallen prey to. DF

Jaded in Chicago #8 (\$1 offset)

This Chicago-focused zine (surprise!) contains interviews with the Get Up Kids, Anti-Flag, Apocalypse Hoboken, and Small Brown Bike, as well as some usual zine fare, including a two-page spread of had-to-have-been-there live reviews. Besides a chuckle-inducing piece on why chubby kids make better lovers, there's not much here to sink your teeth into. Pretty standard. (4031 Forest Ave. Western Springs, IL 60558) DF

Message from the Homeland #5 (\$1 newsprint)

What a bizarre name for a zine. Anyways, we've been getting a lot of Boston hardcore zines in our mailbox lately. Most of them are relatively intelligent, and mean very well, but I really don't think any of them have anything special or unique to offer the zine community. I guess my biggest problem with zines like this is that they try to tackle political and social issues with little to no basis for any authoritarian stances. The interview I did with Brian from Botch really made me think about punks and hardcore kids who spout socialist/anarchist/revolutionary views with no empirical data at all. Instead, I would guess that many punks who espouse destroying the system-- as opposed to merely altering it-- have never read the basic texts of those thinkers and revolutionaries who are likeminded. Therefore, it is hard for me to take the round-table discussion in this issue too seriously since the responses to a question like: "what do you think of the political theory of anarchism" are too vague and presumptuous to be warranted at all. Furthermore, I can't help but wonder how many assumptions go into Brian of Catharsis' responses as well. There's nothing wrong with assumptions-- I make them all the time-- except when trying to talk authoritatively on a subject like what America's greatest accomplishments were in the 20th century. I guess I'm not as concerned with the answers that Brian, Dave from Retraction, Greg from Trial, and Ian from Equal Vision give, 'cause they're all very intelligent people. Instead, I'm a little bit perplexed as to why this zine's editor, Dave (a cool guy, I imagine), thinks that a label rep, a zinester, and two musicians would have answers to such all-encompassing questions of social history and thought. Very good effort on this one, but I don't think a zine is good based solely on effort. (PO Box 4248 Springfield, MA 01101) RS

Zine Reviews, yo!

Mutant Renegade #13 (\$3 newsprint/glossy cover)

For some reason there are an awful lot of "debauchery" zines coming out of the midwest (although I can also think of a bunch out of Florida and San Francisco as well). They don't have any apparent politics, they claim to drink a lot (not a moral I would like the bulk of the punk rock community to condone), and they just don't take anything seriously. Sure, there's nothing wrong with joking around for a few pages. I mean, some would call *Law of Inertia* one big joke entirely. But, *Mutant Renegade* gets so silly and ridiculous that I have a hard time caring about most of what they say. This issue, their millenium issue, features a bathrobe clad, beer drinking young chap sitting on a toilet. It has a bunch of features, like those let's-ask-a-bunch-of-punk-scene-stars-how-they-feel-about-a-certain-issue and then record their response, as well who is the anti-christ (my vote goes to Carson Daly, although they failed to include him). Hmmm. Actually, the best part of the zine, which is usually my biggest complaint for zines in general, are the reviews, which are actually pretty well done. Let's put it this way: if you want a publication that touts itself as "the midwest's leading cultural zine full of white trash attitude" then pick this up. I, on the other hand, think this belongs in the trash. (PO Box 3445 Dayton, OH 45401) RS

Ozzy Rocks #3 (free Xerox)

It's so nice to see that some people have decided to stick to the old-school cut-and-paste mentality of zine layout. While fancy layouts (*LOI* included) can frequently have graphical merit, I'm seeing way too many generic Macintosh layouts in zines, and the cut-and-paste style, when done right, can make for a nice-looking zine. *Ozzy Rocks*, which hails from Dunkirk, NY, serves as a fine example, and while it has a bit of a high school feel to it, I don't hold that against them for a moment, as many of my favorite zines come from high schoolers. Hell, I'm only two years out of that damn place myself. Lots of columns, including an interesting piece on the similarities between the punk rock and hip-hop undergrounds. (PO Box 1084 Dunkirk, NY 14048) DF

Reflections #13 (\$3 color-cardstock cover/offset)

This is one of the better European hardcore zines I've seen. Although the print quality is unusually dark, the layout is clean and interesting. Similarly, the interviews are short and sweet, and the columns are interesting and insightful. Well done! Perhaps the best aspect of this zine is that they do not try to focus on the European scene, *per se*, or exclusively the American hardcore scene. Instead, *Reflections* seems to have a pretty good mix of aggressive music on both sides of the Atlantic. Interesting. You rarely see American zines that focus on anything abroad and I almost never see European zines that cover anything but American music... which sucks. And, while one might think that without a particular scene to focus on that there is very little sense of community here, but not so my friend. It seems that Johan and Suzanne, the two kids in charge of this project, know a lot about music and a lot of people in hardcore. Very good job. Now if only the print quality wasn't so dark.... (De Nijverheid 30 7681 md vroomshoop) RS

Skyscraper #7 (\$4.95 offset/glossy color cover)

The question of whether or not the zine remains a valid and important form of expression is probably best left for another discussion entirely, but it can safely be said that the vast majority of zines—intelligent, laudable, and good-intentioned as they may be—nonetheless have very little of importance to say. It is only a handful (albeit, thankfully, a fairly large handful) of zines that can stake a claim to continuing relevance within the annals of indie rock culture. Now that *Maximumrockandroll* has become a joke and *Punk Planet* has experienced some growing pains of its own, a number of zines are rushing to fill the void they've left behind - not in

terms of content, but as unofficial figureheads for the burgeoning indie rock movement, if it can be described as such. *Skyscraper* is one of these zines, and if you've heard of it before, it's probably because they offer up better writing and richer content than the majority of their peers. Issue #7 of *Skyscraper* is a weighty tome, large enough to qualify for book-style binding, and it contains a whooole lot of writing, most of it dedicated to very in-depth interviews (with the Flaming Lips, They Might Be Giants, the Locust, I Am Spoonbender, etc.) and well-written record reviews (another rarity these days). As a matter of fact, it's hard to find any fault with the uniform quality of the writing found in *Skyscraper*. The zine's professionalism, however, is also its greatest drawback. Despite the well-worded interviews and readable layout, there's no real human feel to the zine, no personality. It's kind of like the *Time* of the zine world - eminently readable, nicely spellchecked and laid out and plenty of interviews with interesting bands, but lacking the personal touches that would differentiate it from any other zine. There's some columns, sure, but they're actually the weak point in the zine; whereas with most other zines the columns are the only saving grace, in *Skyscraper* they feel like a forced effort to add some "color" to the magazine. (PO Box 4432 Boulder, CO 80306) DF

Sound Collector #3 (\$6.50 offset/color cover)

This hefty zine throws record reviews and standard interview styles out the window and instead focuses on probing, in-depth article-style interviews with a wide variety of sonic experimenters, among them Matmos, Mercury Rev, Squarepusher, Silver Jews, and the duo Taylor Deupree and Savvas Ysatis, experimental musicians who have been involved in the fascinating "Architectura" series, which seeks to explore the relationships between music and architecture. Crisp layout and a high content-to-ad ratio make for a read that is both pleasurable and intriguing, particularly because the interviews are so clever—the Ganger interview, for example, consists of 26 questions ranging the alphabet from A to Z, starting with "Ambitions (band/personal)" and ending with "ZZZ - sleep, how important is it?" Other clever ideas abound as well - I loved the article "Songs that Make Boys Cry," which breaks testosterone tear-jerkers into categories like "Women are More Powerful and Frightening Than I'd Like to Admit" and "Animals are Lovable and It's Awful When They Die," although I was shocked to read that none of the boys interviewed for the piece found Radiohead's "Creep" to be even the least bit saddening (!, for one, weep like a little baby every time it's played, but that's another story entirely). Ultimately, *Sound Collector* achieves an honor that very few other zines can claim— it's readable from cover to cover. The \$6.50 price, incidentally, includes a CD full of music, so the price is right too. (PO Box 13089 Philadelphia, PA 19101) DF

Status #11 (\$3 color-cardstock cover/ newsprint)

I know I'll get in trouble for making broad generalizations like this, but I'm going to go out on a limb and say it: I think *Status* is the best zine from California that I know of. Sure there are a lot of others that are a bit more serious (i.e. conceited), professional (i.e. too business oriented), and focuses on covering the hippest music at any given time (i.e. having no pride in their own scene), but *Status* seems to bring a lot of the fun back into zine writing in a way that still doesn't lose site of their goal of bringing you some interesting music, with that said I've got some criticisms as well. 1) The interviews are too short and tend to get quite silly towards the end; 2) the reviews are far too short as well; 3) there really isn't much in here other than the usual music zine swill, like columns, reviews, and interviews. I want more than one non-musical piece damnit! Overall, I am always excited to get *Status* in the mail, as Seth—its esteemed editor—and I seem to have very similar views on what constitutes good music and good literature. Plus the best part is they don't take themselves too seriously! Find this. (Box 1500 Thousand Oaks, CA. 91358) RS

Straight Force #5 (\$3 newsprint)

Wow, when did *Straight Force* get to be so good? I remember

being fairly underwhelmed by the last issue of this magazine, but I'm finding issue #5 (the last issue before the zine changes its name to *Alarm*) to be a significant leap forward, both in terms of the writing, which seems newly mature and reflective, and the layout, which has gotten a ton more creative. In general I'm not a big fan of straight-edge themed magazines (nothing against the lifestyle at all— it's just that most sXe zines seem to be saying the same thing over and over again), but *Straight Force* has obviously expanded from its ideological roots and, while it remains political, it has clearly expanded its focus. The centerpiece of this issue is a lengthy piece on abortion, and I congratulate the zine for having the balls to tackle a tense and controversial subject such as this in their pages. (PO Box 200069 Boston, MA 02120) DF

Stay Free! #16 (\$3.95 color cover/ newsprint)

As far as I'm aware, there often seems to be an inherent link between zine-making and progressive politics. Perhaps it's the empowering effect of D.I.Y. aesthetics at work, but most of the zines I've read in my time (and nearly all of the punk-oriented zines) have had a distinctly leftist political bent to them. I genuinely admire the zinesters of the world for having the ideological courage to state their political convictions, but the problem is that, half the time, they seem to be mouthing the same platitudes over and over. I'm sure I've been guilty of it too. You know the drill: Corporations are bad. War is bad. D.I.Y. is good. Commercialism is bad. Nazis and racists are bad. Free Mumia. Watch out for Big Brother. And so on. All of which I agree with, wholeheartedly, but it's tough to get inspired—or even learn something new—by reading a half-page article called "Why Malls Suck" or whatever. Intelligent, in-depth political debate is not completely absent from the zine world, of course, but it's rare, and investigative or newsworthy articles are even rarer. That's why *Stay Free!* is such a refreshing zine—the whole thing is resoundingly intelligent and well-written from start to finish, and it avoids sloganizing or sinking into tired political clichés. Instead, it provides a well-written and well-rounded peek into the world of advertising and consumerism, much like its equally excellent (if a little pricey) Canadian counterpart, *Adbusters*. No punk rock record reviews here, but rather a remarkably articulate (and never dumbed-down) leftist analysis of how people are enslaved by consumer culture. And there's a wee bit of humor, too, although if you're looking for a barrel of laughs you're probably better off reading *Midget Breakdancing Digest*. This is a fascinating, compelling read, the type of thing I'd pass on to my friends after I was finished. (PO Box 306 Prince St. Station NY, NY 10012) DF

Twin Cities Hardcore Journal #2 (xerox)

I had a roommate freshman year from Minneapolis, so I'm pretty sure the Twin Cities does not refer to Queens and Brooklyn. Keep in mind that my roommate wasn't at all involved in hardcore, so my opinion of the city may be a bit skewed. Needless to say, Minnesota hardcore has come a long way from the artsy vibe of amazing bands like Husker Du. The *Twin Cities Hardcore Journal* shows me that bands like Harvest, Disembodied, and other metalcore acts basically rule the scene there. I'm not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing after reading this zine, because there seems to be shit talking a-plenty in this rag. In fact, the whole interview with Reach the Sky here is basically a defense of what I gather was some shit talking the boys in charge of this zine did in their first issue. They don't defend themselves all that well, and I compliment fan of Reach the Sky for speaking out against what some find to be "humorous." I've never heard of the other two bands interviewed here, Encroach (a band with the worst name I have ever heard) and Holding On, which seems to be Youth Crew style. Overall, there is nothing at all that sets this zine apart. The writing is fair and there really isn't much in here other than the usual interviews/reviews junk. So, this definitely isn't for me, but you may want to check it out if the more obnoxious side of Northern-midwest hardcore literature is your thing. (803 Thomas Ave St. Paul, MN 55104) RS

Track Attack

Acrobat Down "Re: Dereliction" (Atack)

CD- OK, so for every 20 or so CD's I get probably about 3 or 4 of them turn out to be good. Not just decent good, but good worth keeping. Acrobat Down is one of those CD's. Please allow me to explain what puts Acrobat Down in this prestigious category. Acrobat Down simply writes great songs that don't all sound the same. The variation from song to song is pretty amazing, ranging from slow ballads to keyboard drenched pop tunes. Unlike the music, the great song writing stays pretty consistent throughout the album. Another thing I like about these guys is that they are not afraid to experiment and incorporate a lot of samples and instruments not usually used in this genre of music. One of the weirder samples they throw in is an answering machine message of a drunk lady asking out what seems to be one of the band members. Hey, like I said, they like to experiment. If you're one of those bums who absolutely must have a comparison think a more diverse and polished Piebald, or maybe..wait a sec. To be honest these guys have such an original sound your not gonna get a comparison. Buy this. JB

Aftershock "Through The Looking Glass" (Goodlife/Devils Head) CD- I feel like I'm getting old. The last time I saw the name Goodlife was the Rebirth "Of Hardcore Pride" album, and at this point this Belgian label has tons of releases. Unfortunately, Aftershock is not as much fun as Rebirth... was. It is, naturally, total metal. How metal? The record has a slow intro with a repeating guitar scale being played and the vocals remind me of 80's death metal. I guess the idea is, chop up decent metal guitar licks to the point where kids can stomp around to it and it's suddenly hardcore. This is good when they decide to play fast and throw in some nice leads, but too often bands like this try to sound hard while sacrificing good songwriting. The drama of this act is intact (the guitarist also does "synth programming") but the songs sound more like exercises. Apparently Aftershock are from Western Massachusetts. Too schizophrenic and spotty. dup

Against All Authority "24 Hour Roadside Resistance" (Hopeless) CD- I just thought of a great comparison for AAA: Kid Dynamite meets Op Ivy. It's almost uncanny how well that works. Wow, go me! Anyways, here we have the latest installment from Florida's favorite nihilistic political punk rockers, and even though I thought I'd hate this it really really grew on me after about 5 or 6 listens. Their whole schtick is a bunch of the usual destroy-the-system, don't-let-it-destroy-you thing mixed with very frenetic and urgent hardcore. Someone told me they thought AAA played "salsapunk" and after giving this a bunch of listens I know exactly what they mean. Rarely is there a straight-up, straight-ahead chorus on this disc. Instead, the music seems to bounce and gyrate all over the place. I distinctly remember hearing horns on their last release and I could only find horns on one song here, but even without the horns, AAA rock harder than most bands playing punk these days with no problem. RS

The Agency "Engines" (Fiddler) CD- Florida seems to be one of the few places left still giving the pop-punk sound one last try. While places like San Francisco, LA, and New York have

moved onto new and more original sounds, Florida still finds the stuff interesting. Perhaps, the reason is that those formerly prolific bastions of punk-rock superstardom failed to raise more bands that furthered the sound, or even did it in a fun way anymore. There were too many MTX, NOFX, and Green Day copycats for anyone's good. Fortunately, we have Florida to thank for bands like Discount, A Newfound Glory, and The Agency. I saw the Agency last summer when they toured with the Grey AM, a band totally different from the Agency's pop sounds. I was immediately impressed by their technical competence and musicianship which had them pumping out some of the best pop-punk this side of the Mason Dixon line. As a matter of fact, the first song on this record, "Zero", could easily make it to a national radio level with no problem. Equal parts Weezer, NOFX, and Poison: this stuff rocks. RS

Aina (BCore Disc) CD- Hooray! More European hardcore! This is from yet another label that's foreign to me (ha ha, get it? foreign-they're from Europe!), but I wouldn't mind hearing more from. There's no telling where this band is from, but BCORE is based in Barcelona. Oh, and the record itself is very cool- a mix of The Promise Ring's second album melodic sense, Fugazi's "Repeater" rock fury and Knap-sack's amalgam of varying intensity between vocals and music. Which is to say there's enough crunchy rocking croutons to keep this salad from being weighed down by the smooth vocal vinaigrette. Thumbs up on this end, be on the lookout for this. dup

The Album Leaf "An Orchestrated Rise to Fall" (The Music Fellowship) CD- Ah, now this is the stuff. I am not always interested in the Chicago school of instrumental rock (which is really just jazz, but why nitpick); sometimes I just want some intimate songs filled with some light guitar, keyboards, and even strings. Just because this doesn't have an overt groove doesn't mean it's not awesome. What we have are several songs that remind me of the quieter parts of Godspeed You Black Emperor! (there is even some found sound thrown into the mix) that are not aggressive but still manage to hold my attention in a way most instrumental indie rock cannot. This could be huge. JM

Alien Crime Syndicate "Dust to Dirt" (Collective Fruit) CD- Alien Crime Syndicate's debut EP, as far as I'm concerned, was a travesty, an aberration, particularly considering that the band sprung from the ashes of San Francisco power-pop icons the Meices, who never really got the respect they were due while they were around. "Dust to Dirt," the first full-length offering from ACS, still doesn't live up to anything put out by the Meices, but it goes a long way to amend for its unlistenable predecessor. There's still too much studio soundboard muckery obscuring singer Joe Reineke's distinctive voice, but the pop hooks are back in place, and the album has a life that was conspicuously absent the first time around. A couple of songs show the band in top form; the staccato chorus of "I Want it All" is almost- but not quite- cloyingly catchy, and "Nothing Beats the Surf in," which proclaims the beauty of the California coastlines, pretty much encapsulates the West Coast power pop. This album isn't good enough to rank as one of my favorites, but it's good enough to make me take Alien Crime Syndicate seriously again. DF

The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS
du prospicio: dup

Dan Frantic: DF
Jonah Bayer: JB

Jason Murphy: JM
Adam Parks: AP

was reviewing consisted of some variation of what I'm listening to right now. This is good, but it's sooo done. DF

American Steel "Rogue's March" (Look-out) CD- An apology: in the deluge of CDs I had to review for the last issue of Law of Inertia, this one somehow slipped through the cracks, and I couldn't feel guiltier. American Steel are the best band left in Berkeley, and one of the few local groups that still makes me proud to be from the Bay Area. The fact that American Steel are such nice guys is really secondary to the fact that their screaming, '77 style punk rock ripples with intensity and passion. Comparisons to Leatherface, which I'm sure American Steel gets a lot, don't really do them justice, as there is a surprising dimensionality to their music which begins to emerge after a few listens. This isn't for everybody - I can imagine some people being turned off by the rawness and ferocity of the vocals -- but anybody who doesn't like American Steel is no friend of mine. DF

All III "Symbols of Involution" (Bcoredisc)

CD- Somehow, this band managed to make a CD that is only 10 minutes yet still seems too long. Perhaps it's because every song is the same burst of grindcore/meta, the same screamed or growled vocals, and the same blast beats. I am always impressed, though, with a band that can manage to squeeze 11 songs into ten minutes. Now if they would only stop writing the same song over and over again. By the way, this is from Spain, so you will probably never see it, but I wouldn't be too worried about that. JM

Allister "Dead Ends and Girlfriends" (Drive Thru) CD- Ah the early '90s, a time when punk rock was fun, catchy, and free of pretense. I can tell you with honesty that I was weened on NOFX, Pennywise, Green Day, and Lagwagon as early as 1992- my freshman year in high school. Looking back those were good days, filled with me and my friends packed in cars singing along to whatever new skate-punk record had whetted our appetites courtesy of Fat Wreck, Epitaph, Dr. Strange, etc. But the thing is those three labels, which I feel helped bring skate-punk to the masses, had a certain degree of taste. They didn't simply put out any band with palm-muted guitars and some snotty vocals about girls. Sure a lot of that music is really stupid when listened to years later, but c'mon, Epitaph really did have a lot of discretion in who they released. Here we are in the year 2000 and when I listen to Allister I am pretty sure that some bands still wish it was 1993, that they were half as good as Blink 182 (a band that was never very good to begin with), and that boringly simple songs about girls were still cool. RS

American Heartbreak "Postcards from Hell" (Coldfront)

CD- You can't fault American Heartbreak for their guitar-heavy production, which is thicker than a corned-beef sandwich at a Jewish deli in New York City, or for the sneering edge to their songs, which is often reminiscent of "And Out Come the Wolves" era Rancid. Nor can you begrudge them the infectious riffs and tried-but-true chord sequences that carry songs like "Too Beautiful" (a Descendents-on-Vallum rocker) or "Please Kill Me." American Heartbreak obviously has both technical ability and some clever musical ideas. But still, there's nothing particularly unique about their sound, nothing that would clearly distinguish them from the slew of Green Day look-alike bands that got signed to major labels in the post-"Dookie" feeding frenzy of 1994. Back in the mid-90's when I was earnestly cranking out the laughable precursor to this zine, tedfred, it seemed like 90% of the albums I

Anaemia "Stupidity of the Lambs" (Soulreaper) CD- Soulreaper has done it again! Now we've all heard fast bands, but Anaemia is a FAST band. I think they would like to be considered grindcore (based on the album layout where they say, in so many words, that they are grindcore), but I can't help but feel that they are too metal. There are no breakdowns to keep it interesting, though: just fast, fast, fast. Anaemia also exhibits the vocals stylings of two individuals, one who sounds like a big gorilla, and another who sounds like a smaller type of monkey. They take turns singing, but probably both still get really tired, 'cause it probably takes a lot of bananas- or whatever gorillas eat- to keep up with this music on a regular basis. There are no lyrics in the insert, and the words are wholly undiscernible, so you're sort of forced to guess what they are singing about based on the song titles and the fact that they are from Belgium. AP

The Anniversary "Designing a Nervous Breakdown" (Heroes & Villains) CD- When Rolling Stone's next generation of rock historians look back at the turn-of-the-millennium emo-rock movement that, depending on how you choose to look at it, either saved or slew indie rock, it's almost certain that the Getup Kids will hold an iconic place within the movement, a position they've more than earned as the current kings of emo-pop. To say that the Anniversary is just a second-rate Getup Kids is unfair to both bands; firstly, considering that the bands are friends and have released a split 7" together, it's only natural that their sounds should compliment each other. If you listen closely, a number of distinctions begin

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to emerge, and I'm not only referring to like lately these guys have dug up their Lifetime the fact that the Anniversary has both a collection lately, because this album has a lot guy and a girl splitting duties on the micro- more melody and dynamics. There is still a defi-phone. The Anniversary also has a slightly nite youth crew feel to this album but it's more more sugary, Moog-heavy sound than the polished and interesting to listen to than most Getup Kids, who have only recently begun youth crew bands. The B-side of this seven- to seriously incorporate keyboards into their inch sounds more like straight up rock n roll musical arsenal. Still, I have a hunch that, than youth crew. It actually sounds a lot like an ultimately, the dustbin of history will relegate 80's pop tune, but strangely they pull it off really the two bands to the same category. It's a well. Oh wait...it's an Elvis Costello cover. Ok, shame, but it's understandable. DF

Anodyne "Quiet Wars" (Escape Artist) CD- I admit it happily: I hate the Melvins. I think material. I think that this band has potential to they fucking suck. If it weren't for that band, be successful if they stick to this formula. JB the 3 Primus shows I saw when I was 14 at which they opened up wouldn't have been **Back Off Cupids (Drunken Fish) CD-** It's rare half bad. To be honest, it's not necessarily the that I get something truly original to review. Melvins themselves that bugged me. Instead, Most of the time it's easy just to plunk a record it was the whole sludge metal thing that's got into it's well defined category and discuss it's all the kids excited now, and I am convinced strengths and weakness (or if you read my we have the Melvins to thank for this neo- reviews, make fun of the weaknesses). How-sludge sound. Anodyne seems to have that ever once in a while a record comes along that same sludge feel that so many people love/ I just can't make fun of because it's so unique hate about Isis. I do admit that at times there is some real power and musical competence displayed here, but for the most part it just sounds like banging, with a few effects pedals thrown in to spice things up. Oh yeah, incredible artwork. RS

Arson "Words Written In Blood" (Resurrection AD) CD- With all the difficulty I have dealing with all the bad hardcore of the past 6 years, I still don't exactly know how I deal with records like this. This is a real metal record (on a hardcore label no less) with loads of huge monstrous chords out of the Metallica canon and intense riffing along the lines of Iron Maiden. You could do a lot worse. So a touch of classic early 80's metal, a big chunk of thrash, and even a touch of death metal vocals are what bind this together. And it's speedy stuff, aggressive and without too much sludge. The guitarwork is enough to keep any guitar store staff happy, and the record is hard hard hard. So this is how I rest my thoughts here-- there's hardcore and there's metal, and this record is exactly how I like my metal to be. Fin. dup

A-Set "Songs from the Red Room" (Tree) CD- A-Set frontman Albert Menduno's voice is not beautiful in a traditional way. His almost nasal drawl, which belies his San Francisco upbringing, would seem to be at odds with his music. Yet, somehow, it isn't. In fact, the lo-fi songs that Menduno (who has done time with the ambiently pretty group Duster, among others) has cranked out from the depths of his room have a fuzzy charm that his vocals only accentuate. Like Bowie minus the glam-rock flair or Guided by Voices minus the Ric Ocasek makeover, his songs possess a certain subdued romanticism that doesn't require classically trained vocal cords or big-budget production to sound wonderful. DF

Automatic (Reflections) 7"- This band has really matured in the last couple of years. In fact I don't think this sounds at all like their seven inch that came out a couple of years ago on Capsule Records. For those of you not familiar with Automatic it features Thommy from the Enkinds, as well other members of popular Louisville hardcore bands. This band's earlier material was fairly straight ahead youth crew hardcore with little variation. It sounds

I think I'm giving these guys a little more credit than they deserve, but nonetheless this record shows a great improvement over their previous material. I think that this band has potential to all rolled up into some good old fashioned rock and roll. I'm not talking about music disguised as rock, but really all it is is bad punk rock. Nah, this is the real deal. Perhaps a good comparison would be the Stooges meet the Exile on Main Street era Rolling Stones, if you see that one. A lot of people have been telling me that the future of punk rock ain't in that electronica crap, or metalcore, but rather in rock and roll. If the dark and moody sounds of BCM are any indication I'll be watching attentively. RS

Berzerk "Theyafame" (Recess) CD- Holy cow, what do we have here? Where was this band when I assembled my women in punk issue. This Portland, OR female fronted band has everything any punk kid needs for cred: relentless drums, simple guitar parts perfect for circle pits, and a lead singer who flat out hands down rocks! The recording isn't that great here. But, anyone into bands like the Circle Jerks, 7 Seconds, or some of the more crude NYC hardcore must check this out. RS

Billy Mahonie "The Big Dig" (Too Pure/Beggars Banquet) CD- "The Big Dig," the debut effort from Britain's Billy Mahonie, is without a doubt an ambitious work, an entirely instrumental work that at some points echoes the angular guitar sounds of Polvo or Slint and elsewhere devolves into abstracted swirls of spacey pop. Like many bands reaching for a sound more intelligent and complex than that of the majority of their peers, Billy Mahonie (that's the band's name, by the way, not a person's name) succeed only occasionally; at

some points they deliver dense and captivating rock opuses (notably the sublimely beautiful "Glenda" and "We Accept American Dollars"), but from time to time their heady sound careers a little too far off into the void for my tastes. Nevertheless, this is a promising debut album from a band to watch, and a worthwhile addition to the collection of those music aficionados who value instrumental genius over catchy pop hooks. DF

Bitesize "The Best of" (Packing Heat) CD-

Most people have never heard of San Francisco's power-poop band, Bitesize, and with very good reason. Sample lyric: "I really got your goat/ I'm not a mathematician/ and you're not a very good sport/ where are the others at/ I wasn't the only one there/ it's just a twenty dollar coat/ and now it looks like a dumpling." This is some of the most annoying, silly music I've ever heard. If you buy this record we are no longer friends. RS

Black Cat Music "This is the New Romance" (Cheetah's) CD- I saw this band about a year ago in Oakland, their hometown, and was quite impressed. Although Black Cat Music features ex-members of the Criminals we are all fortunate that they sound nothing at all like everyone's least favorite snot-punk band. Instead, this quartet can go from creepy to catchy to gutsy and all rolled up into some good old fashioned rock and roll. I'm not talking about music disguised as rock, but really all it is is bad punk rock. Nah, this is the real deal. Perhaps a good comparison would be the Stooges meet the Exile on Main Street era Rolling Stones, if you see that one. A lot of people have been telling me that the future of punk rock ain't in that electronica crap, or metalcore, but rather in rock and roll. If the dark and moody sounds of BCM are any indication I'll be watching attentively. RS

Bob Tilton "Crescent" (Southern) CD- Bob Tilton. I was so thinking this was going to be some folky stuff that I needed to be drinking a latte to understand. How surprised was I when I realized this was some tasty emo? Not only is no one in the band named Bob Tilton, but it is several fellows from England that rock out like crazy. Yeah, the lyrics are very relationship based, but there just doesn't seem to be much whining here. These guys also seem to be a lot more aggressive than your run of the mill emo group. This CD was definitely a welcome surprise and it has become a staple in my CD player. I'm still wondering about the odd name, but what are you going to do, right? JM

Bob Tilton "The Leading Hotels of the World" (Southern) CD- You can sense when a band is real because there is a sense of urgency to their sound. Something pushing them ahead (beyond the drums), but to where? Who knows. Bob Tilton has that urgent sound down pact. You throw this on and it is not happy or sad, it's just pushing ahead, and the listener cannot help but get caught up in what's happening. In simple terms, this is indie rock with the indie rock guitar sound and emo lyrics and intentions. I could compare this to early Promise Ring or a less noisy Cursive. In more complex terms, this is music that isn't necessarily what you are going to reach for when you need to stay awake on a late night drive, but that doesn't mean it's boring. It just means that it makes up the volume with old fashioned confusion and tension. Why isn't this on the cover of Rolling Stone (or Law of Inertia)? JM

Boss Hog "Whiteout" (In the Red) CD- I think this is Boss Hog's strongest record to date. Cristina Martinez has never sounded better and she is complemented by a great rhythm section. OK, so sometimes this gets a little bit too close to Garbage territory, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing, is it? Regardless, Jon Spencer can really do no wrong in my book and his guitar playing and backup vocals are top notch. I hate comparing this band to Delta 72 because I think they are much better but if your one of those

chumps who needs a reference band there you go. Oh yeah and the artwork has a naked chick on it. How many more reasons do you need to buy this? JB

Boy Sets Fire "After the Eulogy" (Victory) CD- Geez, this band rocks so hard. But, there's so much more to this Delaware quintet than crunchy chords and melodic breakdowns. Boy Sets Fire never seems to take enough flack. Whether it's them shutting down the Columbus fest for 4 hours to discuss issues in hardcore, or their much hyped move from Initial to Victory. Some of my best friends have called these guys "whiners," or "a band that takes themselves more seriously than they should." But, that's so stupid. If writing songs about the atrocities of governmental abuse or the horrors of rape, in addition to trying to deal with the problems relevant to everyone's favorite musical form, is bad then call me Michael Jackson. Boy Sets Fire are not whiners or self-involved losers. They are a very dedicated band and manage to convey emotion and personality in their music like few others bands-- while still remaining personally connected to their subject matter. Fuck man, when did it become irritating to sing about political issues that may hit a little too close to home for some? Boy Sets Fire seems to generally want to change the face of music, not just by talking a good game, but actually believing in what they sing about. And thank god we don't have any annoying sXe rhetoric like the more acceptable hardcore bands out there. This is an inspirational album, much like the rest of their stuff (although I'm sure many fans of this band will abandon them once they realize they aren't emo and never were). Get this. Oh yeah, this record blows their last full length away. RS

Braid "Lucky to be Alive" (Glue Factory) CD- To be honest, I was never a huge fan of Braid. I always thought that they were a decent band, but even after seeing them live I didn't have the urge to go out and buy any of their releases. However after listening to this live document of their final show, I finally realize what the fuss was all about. This album really demonstrates that Braid was on top of their game when they decided to break up, and proves it by playing some new material, which is some of their best yet. While the sound quality isn't as good as a studio album, you can really feel the energy and emotion that is poured into these songs. I think all of their best material was put on this album, especially their song "Forever got Shorter," off of the notorious Postmarked Stamps series (Tree Records). Usually, I feel that live albums should be reserved for diehard fans, since they are usually not a good introduction to a band. This album is a rare exception, and I think it would be enjoyed by hardcore fans as well as though new to this now famous indie rock band. JB

Braid "Movie Music" (Polyvinyl) 2xCD- Braid achieved a near-legendary status before they even broke up, and now that they're recently departed, most people speak of them in hushed tones of awe and reverence. In their six-year, 25-odd release existence, these feisty emo boys rocked out at hundreds of live shows and almost single-handedly put Chicago back on the map again. "Movie Music," a 36-song double CD, chronologically archives all their cover songs, 7" and compilation releases, and a handful of newer unreleased songs as well. As with any musical retrospective, there are both hits and misses here, and while Braid completists would be fools to pass this up, the casual fan would

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probably be better off saving some money and buying the nearly flawless "Frame & Canvas" instead. DF

Buck Shot Shorty "Wishful Thinking" (Lowbrow) CD- It's tough to take a band seriously when they thank God in their liner notes. You just can't swallow the snot that a punk band is spewing when you get images of them teaching Sunday school. Granted, this isn't on Tooth & Nail, and none of the songs are overtly religious, but we all have our biases that we have to deal with, don't we? So yeah, this is snotty pop punk about ex-girlfriends and going to shows with the bass quite prevalent in the mix (which I think Green Day brought to the masses). This will get you bouncing for a minute, but then you'll probably realize that you've heard it before. On the other hand, if you haven't heard this before, you could do worse. Someone get these guys on the phone with Lookout, they probably wouldn't mind a record contract (see, I'm not all bad). JM

By Virtue Alone "Odds Against Tomorrow" (Common Ground) CDep- Wow, this is seriously ridiculous. It's like the Merauder meets something even shittier (if you can get shittier than that.) The press sheet claims that this band formed when they all served military time in Japan, and they were the only American band in the Japanese scene. Hmmm, I don't know how they play hardcore in Japan- and the little I've heard isn't much better than this- but I imagine the Madball thing is way in effect there. I actually have no idea who would even like this. But, if a slow, boring, chugga-chugga hardcore band with a singer, who has the worst voice since the dude from Sheer Terror, is your thing then check this out. I however, think this totally fucking sucks. RS

The Capitol City Dusters/ Aina "split" (Superbad/Dischord) 7"- While the Capitol City Dusters feature Ben from Delta 72, don't let that fool you into thinking this is another Delta 72 side project. In fact The Capitol City Dusters sound more influenced by Fugazi and Sarmiarn then by the Make Up or Delta 72. They play really poppy indie rock which is pretty simple, but has lots of energy. The vocal parts are really well written and help make this band stand out from the crowd. However it's Aina that steals the show on this split. Aside from being the only post-hardcore band from Barcelona (yes, Barcelona) that I've ever heard of, these guys really know how to rock. Aina has a much more layered and textured sound the Dusters, and the fact that their music is more complex and dynamic definitely makes it more enjoyable to listen to. I hear a big Jawbox influence here, and this is one of the better post-hardcore releases that I have heard in a while. Let's face it, Dischord wouldn't put this out if it wasn't a great record, and they really picked a winner here. JB

The Casket Lottery "Moving Mountains" (Second Nature) CD- Sometimes it is easier to think of a few nice things to say about a band that you don't really like than it is to think of a few nice things to say about a band you think is great. Original music is very hard to describe in a textual medium because you can't be like "It sounds like The Get Up Kids", which you can say about most pseudo-poppy/emo independent rock bands. This is the first album that I have been hooked on awhile. The Casket Lottery is a pair of straining but sung vocals over per-

fected indie rock. The songwriting caliber and mathematical know-how of Braid is approached on this album, but "Moving Mountains" carries a bit more of an edge. It would not offend your mother, but it is far superior to the banal indie-pop that seems to be so popular with the kids these days. The record exhibits competent musicianship, original and interesting lyrics with some nice harmonies, and beautiful audio production. I would highly recommend this album to any fan of energetic but non-abrasive independent rock and roll. It's one of the best new bands I've heard in a long time. You also might want to get it because Sean from Coalesce appears as a guest vocalist. Actually, he just says "dead" a bunch of times which I think he already does on a Coalesce album. AP

Casket Lottery/Waxwing (Second Nature) 7"- It's hard to think of any other labels besides Second Nature who consistently sign great bands. This seven inch is no exception and contains a Casket Lottery song which is on their upcoming full length "Moving Mountains." It's hard to describe Casket Lottery but they remind me of Piebald except much more technical and with more stops and starts. I think that this band is going to be huge. Waxwing is a little more laid back but also plays beautiful rockin' emo with really passionate vocals. I wasn't familiar with them before this seven inch but I would definitely recommend checking out something by them in the future. Let's face it, you just can't go wrong with Second Nature. The fact that this is numbered and on orange vinyl is just a bonus, buy it if you can find it. JB

Cataract "War Anthems" (Team Player) 7"- As soon as I saw this record I thought "uh oh, another overseas generic metal band." Then I opened the sleeve and saw the guitarist wearing a Buried Alive shirt... not a good sign. After the extremely boring sample that seemed to go on forever, the music kicked in and I realized my predictions were right. Cataract plays mid-tempo hardcore in the vein of Hatebreed and it has been done a million times before. Not that these guys do it badly, there is just nothing that makes them stand out and after this style has been so overdone, what's the point? 90% of the records I get to review from overseas get bad reviews simply because they are all doing the metal hardcore thing in an unoriginal way. Maybe this is what's big over there but it just doesn't cut it for me. Let's hope these guys realize there is much better stuff out there than the Victory Records back catalog. Sorry, but I wouldn't wish this record on my worst enemy. JB

Cease (Natural High) AP- Imagine Grade's second album without the emo parts (If you are thinking "Who's Grade?", then you will most likely not care for Cease). Now imagine that instead of Grade being from Canada, that they are from Switzerland and when they sing in English it is cute and funny because it doesn't always make sense. Now you are imagining Cease. Actually, with that picture, I have given this album too much credit. The songwriting is generic and overall uninteresting, and the recording quality is embarrassing. This is the kind of record that high school bands put out in their hometown, not that anyone releases internationally. The best part is most certainly the novelty of the lyrics. Lines like, "the totally intoxication of the sense" will make you laugh

The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS Dan Frantic: DF
du prospicio: dup Jonah Bayer: JB

Jason Murphy: JM
Adam Parks: AP

and cry. Then you will probably just turn it off because it is, at best, difficult to appreciate a song about the new millennium, especially post-y2k. I believe I am being generous in capturing all of the merit of this album in the above quote. Just read it again and save your money. AP

Centro-Matic "All the Falsest Hearts Can Try" (Quality Park) CD- When I was in high school, I went to a Son Volt concert. Sometime after that I got rid of my Son Volt CD. A couple months ago I taped that same CD from a friend. Thus began my all-country phase. Granted, it's limited, consisting only of Son Volt, Uncle Tupelo, and Whiskeytown, but now I've added Centro-Matic to the line-up. This band is three parts Uncle Tupelo, one part Pavement. If you don't know what that means, imagine that some guys decided that they would make country music cool by making it rock more and by singing about politics instead of about trucks. This is a bold move considering the stigma attached to country music and country/western culture, and considering that there are a lot of people who claim their music preferences as "everything but country". So initially, these guys get props for that endeavor (though they certainly owe a LOT to their predecessors). Following that, they get props for writing songs that are catchy but not poppy. They get props for writing good lyrics about age-old political issues that have seemingly been exhausted as song subjects. And they get props for making a raw and unpolished recording that toes the good side of the line between "too produced" and "poorly recorded". This record is for a limited audience, but that audience is sure to love it. AP

Charlie Brown Gets A Valentine/ Inkling (Spoiled) 7"- Remember in the last issue the top ten most emo names of the nineties? I think that "Charlie Brown Gets A Valentine" should definitely be a late addition to that list. Luckily these guys aren't whiny emo, but play upbeat pop-punk in a style not too far off from Gameface or Digger. While these guys aren't terribly innovative, they are good at what they do. This isn't really my thing but if you like your punk with lots of pop you'll probably like this. When I flipped this record I was expecting to hear more happy pop punk but was instead jarred by chaotic metalcore stylings of Inkling. After I adjusted to the initial shock I decided I liked Inkling. They are chaotic with lots of stops and starts, but also retain a sense of melody to hold their song together. I think it's really cool to have two bands who have completely different styles on the same seven inch. I'm not really into the style of music either of these bands play although they are both good at what they do and shouldn't be overlooked. If grind or pop punk (or both) is your thing you might want to give this a chance, but I wouldn't rush out to the record store to buy this. JB

The China White "The Gun of the Enemy" CD- I do tend to like bands that run the gamut, and this CD is right up my alley. We're talking everything from really noisy indie rock to quiet numbers with strings to straight up emo songs and back again. I was disconcerted for much of the album, as there seems to be many aspects borrowed from the glam metal era of the late 80's. By that, I'm not talking about the band running around in fishnets, but the vocals and the ballads do have that certain something (I thought of Poison). Perhaps it is just the fact that all the songs sound confident, which is not a trait common to indie rock or emo. Maybe I should just take my lighter out, hold it high during the

power ballads, and not feel guilty. Recommended. JM

Chino "Mala Leche" (Mag Wheel) CD- Wow, I had a horrible time in Canada last weekend. My band played in Michigan and we decided to go up to Windsor with another band and do some gambling. Their van got held up at customs and we never found them. We also got lost and couldn't find the casino and got overcharged at Taco Bell. All in all it was a disaster and I developed a newfound hatred to our neighbors to the north. So when I got this CD and discovered that Chino was from Quebec I couldn't wait to rip it apart. I put it in the CD changer and wanted to hate this so much, unfortunately it totally rocks. Chino plays rock with great hooks and while I wasn't crazy about the vocals I got used to them after a while and ended up liking them. My main question about this CD is why is everything in Spanish since they are from Quebec? Last time I checked they spoke French up there. The first song is called "Uno Mas"? Well I give up, but here's my advice buy this EP but stay out of Canada. JB

Chubbies "She Wanted More" (Mutant Pop) 7"- Have you heard of the Chubbies? Evidently this band has been putting out records since 1994 unbeknownst to me and who knows who else. I'll admit I was a little put off by the band name and the very "D.I.Y." layout. I've just reviewed so many bad records lately that when I put this on the turntable I expected the worst. I was quite surprised to hear some rockin' pop tunes with a female vocalist who can...(GASPI)... actually sing! Christine's voice reminds me a lot of Christie Hynde. In fact the music actual reminds me of the Pretenders as well, which is good after hearing 50 bands that try to sound like either Coalesce or the Get Up Kids. I do however, disagree with the cover of the record that says to file this under Mutant Pop. I know that's the name of the label but I just don't think that this band really fits under the typical "Mutant Pop" sound (which is definitely a good thing in my opinion). I would file this under 80's rock/pop and while I didn't quite get a chubby when listening to it, this is still a damn good piece of vinyl. JB

Cloudburst "love, lies, bleeding" (Mosh Bart Industries) 7"- Cloudburst is a metal hardcore outfit which hails from France. To be honest, these guys are much better than most of the metal hardcore coming out of the states. They play fairly technical metal with melodic guitar lines and screamed vocals. Just when it starts to get boring these guys break into a really haunting quiet part (think Converge) then bring it up again. If I had to compare these guys to anyone else I would think of them as a cross between Converge and Brother's Keeper, except French (luckily for me, the lyrics are in English). These guys also seem pretty intelligent, which is proved in the lyrics and the paragraphs which help by elaborating on the topics covered in the lyrics. Yeah the song titles and pictures on the sleeve are pretty cheesy, but don't they like David Hasselhoff in France? It could be much worse. Overall this is a solid debut for this band and if they could get an opening slot with a bigger U.S. metal hardcore band I could see them breaking pretty big over here. I hope they get that opportunity because they deserve it. Good effort. JB

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Common Rider "Last Wave Rockers" (Panic Button) CD- Friend: Hey Jonah, did you hear that Jesse from Operation just released a new CD with his band Common Rider?

Me: No I didn't. Is it any good?

Friend: No, it's not good at all. It's a mix between really boring reggae and slow tempo 2nd wave ska. I'd rather listen to No Doubt.

Me: Hey that's pretty harsh, besides I really liked Operation Ivy.

Friend: Well this isn't Operation Ivy, okay? Jesse vanished off the face of the Earth for like ten years, and this is the best he could do? Give me a break.

Me: Dude, I heard he went to India and studied Krishna in a temple for a few years, it's not like he was writing songs for ten years, cut him some slack.

Friend: Whatever Jonah, this disc still sucks, it made the Joe Strummer solo CD look like a masterpiece.

Me: So what should I write about it in my record review then? I've gotta get it to Ross this week or he's gonna kick my ass.

Friend: I don't know, that's not my problem I just call 'em how I see 'em. 'Nuff said. JB

Crispus Attacks "Destroy The Teacher" (Soda Jerk) CD- Ok, what's this about with the hardcore bands with actual people's names as band names? Charles Bronson, Yaphet Kotto, and now Crispus Attacks? How about I call my band Sojourner Truth or Zero Mostel- that sounds cool. Regardless, this is fucking great stuff. Imagine a scattered yet cohesive mix of early 80's US hardcore- JFA, DRI, Agnostic Front, Siege, 7 Seconds, Jerry's Kids- basically everything that's blazingly fast and thrashy. This record honestly sounds like something that Grand Theft Audio would re-issue. But it's amazing stuff nonetheless, since it's played DIFFERENTLY than any of those bands would venture. Without being speedcore or power-violence, this is exactly what I'd expect to read about in an Puszone article in a mid-80's issue of Thrasher. Catchy, but nonetheless fast and brutal with screamed vocals. Give it up to the boys for harnessing the style that went away 15 years ago and writing some killer songs. Hey, anyone got a skatekey? My trucks are loose. dup

Cross my Heart "The reason I failed history" (Dim Mak) CD- Once upon a time there was a punk band called Blank from Maryland. They are probably one of the best bands you have never heard of and created beautiful pop punk songs full of melody and emotion. Blank broke up a year ago, but Cross My Heart carries some of their ex-members. This new EP really shows how the direction of the music has evolved from a fairly straight forward punk band to what can only be described as "emo." However, I'm not using the word emo with the negative connotation usually attached to it. In fact, I really like this. In my opinion it is really hard to make this transition successfully from traditional punk/hardcore to more mellow type of rock, and not many bands can pull it off (ex: new Chamberlain.) Cross My Heart does the slow emo thing but likes to build the tension and rock out as well. I would like to see a little more of the rocking out, but they do both styles pretty well. Even though this is only four songs, it does get a little tedious to listen to after a while. This is a solid release, but hear-

ing their previous band, makes me believe these guys can do even better. Watch out for them down the road. JB

Damien Jurado "Postcards and Audio Letters" (Made in Mexico) CD- Why is this zine getting so many strange-as-fuck records in the mail lately? Does every record label that puts out some avant-garde disc of music or, in this case, letters to people recorded on a CD, think that LOI covers weird music? Or even more appropriately that we *should* cover weird music? Actually music, per se, is a bit misleading as this isn't even music, it's just people speaking for almost an hour. Why would a talented guy like Damien Jurado, whose last CD on Sub Pop was great acoustic pop, bother with this crap? No, I think a better question- as I could easily see how someone would be fascinated with the making of this disc, if not the listening part- would be why would any label possibly want to put this out? Listen Damien, a word of advice: Andy Warhol's paintings were groundbreaking and brilliant. His explorations into music and other artistic medium were less than. RS

The Damn Personals "Diver/Driver" (Big Wheel Recreation) CD- Big Wheel is one of the best labels in the nation right now. Like Jade Tree, Big Wheel is great not only because the music they release is top-notch- which it usually is-, but rather because they keep you guessing. They don't only release hardcore or emo, but instead mix it up, and make even the most close-minded kid on the block's record collection a bit more diverse. So, here we have The Damn Personals. They sound nothing like Piebald, or In My Eyes, or Jimmy Eat World. Instead, this is Boston answer to Elvis Costello or the Jam. And, it's good stuff... really good. Mod-pop melody sure to have you bouncing around the room or consider pulling out those old Who records for the first time in ages. I don't know what else to say, this record is good stuff and I'm so glad it isn't more emo. RS

Deformity "Murder Within Sin" (Next Sentence) CD- Geez, why are people so angry in Belgium? It seems that the only things to do there are worship the devil and practice guitar. I'm not sure if Deformity actually worships the devil but they definitely spent some serious time practicing their guitar licks. The complex guitar parts definitely add to this band and I'll take their articulate speed picking over an open E chug-riff any day of the week. Generally this is mid tempo "metal-core" with the occasional blast beat thrown in for good measure. Deformed kind of reminds me of Integrity minus the guitar solos and hardcore style breakdowns. I could see kids going insane in the pit during this band's set if they get the chance to play the States. Come to think of it, I hope they do get the chance to play the States because they are a hell of a lot more talented than most of the unoriginal bands in this genre I've seen lately. I can overlook the horrendous layout and really bad band name and confidently state that fans of heavy music would most likely dig what Deformity has to offer. Not bad at all. JB

The Delta 72 "OOO" (Touch And Go) CD- Having heard volumes about this act, I admit I think this is the first time I've ever actually listened to them. Any band that features the Hammond organ is on my team no matter what. Delta 72 play a kind of heavy R&B with a lot of rock guitar. It always gets compared to the Rolling

Stones' early work or the Who, but I find the organ takes it all further into a different style. It sounds like the band was based around the organ, and the dual vocals seem to complement the line that's being played on the Hammond at any given moment. This record also enlists moog, Arp Strings, and Clavinet keyboards. The first track has two local gospel singers on backups. Yeah, it's that type of thing. Good dirty-sounding music in a 60's style. dup

The Distillers (Hellcat) CD- One would think that as a label like Epitaph/Hellcat becomes more prosperous, releasing CDs more conducive with mainstream tastes than the punk underground, they would forget about the sound of the true underground. I don't mean they would turn their back on the bands like Rancid and NOFX who gave them their cred and their success, but perhaps they would try to promote artists like Tom Waits and Tricky, who could guarantee more commercial success than the straight-up punk rock of yore. This is why I was quite happy to hear this release. The Distillers, a group of 3 girls and a guy, play a mix of music taking aspects of garage and punk equally and combining them for a whiskey-fueled sound not unlike Rancid meets the Swingin Utters. The singer sounds sort of like Tim Armstrong meets Courtney Love (and I don't mean that in a bad way). The final result is driving, straight-ahead punk rawk that will have you bouncing in your cowboy hat and moshing the soles of your favorite creepers. Good stuff for all you kids that have lost faith in punk rock. RS

Dragbody "Flip The Kill Switch" (Now or Never) CD- How did some metal band out of Florida manage to swing Steve Albini as the producer for this album? I guess playing in Shellac isn't covering all the bills. On another note, this CD is crazy. And I'm not just using that word because it sounds good; it really is crazy. With a name like Dragbody, you know it is metal as hell, but you can't imagine where this band is going. One second, they're doing the grindcore thing, then it's a soft guitar part than the super fast speed metal comes at you, all in the space of one song. And though that doesn't sound too far from other bands out there, these guys do it in a way that catches you completely off guard. Granted, I will probably never play this CD again (I saw them live once and was thoroughly unimpressed), but I applaud them for making a truly nuts album that I'm sure kids out there will eat up. My glass is raised. JM

Drowningman "How to Light Cigarettes in Prison" (Revelation) CD- Let me start out by saying this EP sounds a lot different than I expected. What I expected was the typical Hydra Head-esque sludge metal sound that the kids seem to like so much nowadays. What I got was innovative metal hardcore with melodic parts that can only remind me of Cave In when they were actually good. Yeah, Drowningman does the technical metal thing really well but the melodic parts are what really make this record stand out. While listening to this EP I was reminded a lot more of Silent Majority than Converge. The great production on this record also helps these guys get their sound across. I would recommend this for anyone

who likes metal hardcore but has a sweater-vest emo kid on the inside trying to break out. Check this out. Oh yeah, bonus points for the cool red jewel case. JB

Dynamite Boy "Finder's Keeper's" (Fearless) CD- For some reason I'm really into illustrations

of broken hearts, lost hearts, stolen hearts, etc. on the covers of CDs and zines.

Call me sentimental, but they always make me nod my head in approval and quip in a Homer Simpson voice, "it's funny 'cause it's true." Needless to say I was quite happy with the cover art to this CD, which depicts a girl satisfied over the theft of some poor kid's heart. Okay, onto the music. Here we have some pretty standard Fearless brand punk rock. I'm thinking Kerplunk-era Green Day meets one of the slower, more melodic Fat Wreck bands like Bracket or Limp. I've never been too into Green Day's work during that period, I've always thought the stuff before and after that album was much catchier and more fun. However, I understand that there are those that swear by "Kerplunk" and find it to be the best pop-punk has to offer. So make up your own mind, dammit! RS

Elliot "Will You" (Revelation) 7"- I don't really know what word to use to describe this band other than amazing. This 7" was released simultaneously with another 7" on Initial Records with nearly identical packaging. While I haven't heard that 7", this one shows how this band is constantly progressing and innovating at every corner. I saw these guys play with Hot Water Music a few months back, and what made them stand out the most is the way they incorporate electronic noises into the music without making it sound boring and cheesy (like a certain band from Boston who doesn't know when to quit). The A side of this record shows the potential this band has and where they are heading. The pure emotion in the vocals, the orchestral beauty of the music, and magnificent song writing makes me wonder, how do these guys write this stuff? The B-side is a cover of an 80's new wave song by the Chameleons which is also really good but does not compare to Elliot's original material. The CD version of this has 2 more songs and if this song is any indication of their newer material you should definitely

from these guys soon, it could be the album of the year. JB

The Ending Again (Modern Radio) 7"- Wow, I really don't like this. Basically, this sounds like early 80's west coast punk a la the Circle Jerks or D.I. I really have a problem with this band, as well as with this genre in general. Allow me to explain, 99% of this (early 80's punk) just isn't good. If it was 1985 it would be a different story and I'm sure I would rock out the Ending Again. Fortunately it's the year 2000 and there is just so much more stuff out there more worthy of listening to. My question is does anyone really like this music or do people just listen to it for punk credibility?

Now you may disagree with me but realistically how many early 80's punk records do you actually listen to on a regular basis? As far as the Ending Again, they're good at what they do, I just don't want to listen to it. However, if your favorite movie is Suburbia and you wear your leather jacket in the summer you probably will. JB

Enemy You "Where No One Knows My Name" (Panic Button) CD- Just when I had about given up on Panic Button I hadn't yet heard Enemy You. Okay, sure this San Francisco quartet bear striking resemblances to

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The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS
du prospicio: dup

Dan Frantic: DF
Jonah Bayer: JB

Jason Murphy: JM
Adam Parks: AP

down to the guitar overdubs and background vocals, they have a Y2K charm that is hard to find in Fat Wreck-esque punk nowadays. I have to say I'm very impressed by this release and have been humming the wow-ohs all night long. This is driving music made for the lovesick. Worth checking out. RS

Ensign "Three Years Two Months Eleven Days" (Indecision) CD- Man, I had to dig up a bunch of records to figure this one out. Ensign is, as many know, one of the bigger hardcore acts from the NY/NJ area. They started out in 1995 and apparently have NO original members left! Indecision put out this record shortly after Ensign released their first record for the watery 'indie' label, Nitro. As the name suggests, it covers the time period that Ensign spent at the label (not including their first album.) So, basically, this compiles 2 7's ("Alzheimers" and "Fall From Grace"), comp tracks ("Hold" from the "Growing Stronger" comp, and the "Devil's Night" 7"), 2 covers (Insted's "We'll Make The Difference" and Underdog's "Say It To My Face") and a few demo versions as well as a short live set from '98. It's a good primer to their early work, which certainly blew me away when it came out. Ensign was perhaps the most successful at blending the traditions of positive, personal hardcore with the modern sound of mid-90's hardcore. They certainly did better than the rest of their NJ/PA peers in the attempted resurgence of post-core. My only complaint: the packaging is good, with lyrics and pictures, but almost NO explanation of where the tracks came from. Still, very powerful stuff. dup

The Exploder "West End Kids Crusade" (Dim Mak) CD- The first track on this record is awesome. Plus, it is called "Vicious Robot". Two sad guys yelling sadly over honest straight-up rock with an acoustic guitar breakdown and lyrics that don't sound like they were extracted from every emo song ever written. It's more like a DC version of emcore. A very welcome and refreshing listen. All the songs sound pretty much the same, and there isn't much to distinguish one from the next, but they're all good so it's no big deal. The downside is, only six songs, but all of them good. A little bit overly reminiscent of 400 Years, but a pretty original sound overall. Get this. AP

The Explosion (Jade Tree) CDep- Holy shit! How did this get on Jade Tree? Somehow, it seems nutty that the label who released records by Euphone and Jets to Brazil would put this out. Then again, they did have that Kid Dynamite band.... The Explosion sound like all the great UK early street punk acts- Cockney Rejects, Angelic Upstarts, Cocksparrer, and they even have a touch of Buzzcocks in there. Total rocking tough melodic, that only a select few new acts can pull off. And it's catchy, but tough enough for the Oi crowd to dig. They even mixed the drums all loud and the vocals down a bit for that classic punk feel. Unbelievably pure, and balls out energy from this Boston act ready to take on the world. dup

The Eyeliners "Here Comes Trouble" (Panic Button) CD- This album has walking basslines and four-chord progressions in spades. It also has punk rock girls singing real nice-like about

boys and partying and partying with boys. It certainly won't challenge your intelligence, but it might be fun to put on at a party where people are dancing, or to play when you are driving a convertible somewhere really fast (do punk kids have convertibles?), especially if you are on your way somewhere to go surfing. Unfortunately, in Ithaca, NY there is absolutely nowhere to go surfing, so make your own conclusions. My housemate Kate said that people who like the Donnas might like the Eyeliners. I assume she is right. AP

Fastbacks "The Day That Didn't Exist" (Spin-ART) CD- As the saying goes, three things in life are certain: death, taxes, and the Fastbacks. Like a metaphorical security blanket for pop-punkers everywhere, the Fastbacks (twenty years and still going strong) have a permanence that is rare in a musical landscape, wherein most bands are lucky to have a shelf-life of five years. Not only that, but the Fastbacks are playing the same damn music they were playing twenty years ago; and I say this not scornfully but rather with a sort of wide-eyed reverence. You see, commercial success may have proven elusive to the Fastbacks all these years, but their commitment to playing pure, joyful pop augmented with Kim Warnick's angelic vocals and Kurt Bloch's masterful guitar wizardry has been a consistent boon to in-the-know fans. Their new release, "The Day That Didn't Exist," may have barely registered a blip in the mainstream music media, but this is an album that does not deserve to be forgotten. Anyone who insists that the Fastbacks are no longer relevant clearly does not understand the true meaning of rock and roll. DF

Fast Times "Counting Down" (Smorgasboard) CD- The cover of this album really reminded me of that old Nintendo game Metroid. Do you remember the enemies in that game, well it's possible that they could have influenced the layout of this. And do you remember 80's skate punk? Well they definitely influenced the music. This sounds like the Circle Jerks with way less originality and female vocals. I mean I'm sure it was cool to listen to this stuff in the mid-80s when the punk scene was starting to expand, but who the hell would want to listen to this stuff in 2000? I honestly don't understand why anyone would want to listen to this; hell at least you can get some punk credibility points from listening to the Circle Jerks. What do you get from listening to Fast Times? All I got was headache, does anyone have any aspirin? JB

Figure Four "Exercise Your Demons" CD- "We rock, you suck." Not really the way to encourage a strong following, but then again, what do I know? This reminds me of Kiss and Queen without the extra long tongues, blood, and moustaches. You know what I'm talking about: big guitars, big lyrics, big solos, big drums, yet oh so boring and lame. I want rock and roll, not the made for TV dramatization. I'm also a little disturbed by the gym/workout theme in the layout; the muscle bound guy on the front, flexing with flames behind him, is pretty scary. As you can tell, I don't like this. Does this mean you have to take my word for it? No. Don't say you haven't been warned, though. JM

Fireballs Of Freedom "Total Fucking Blow-out" (Estrus) CD- Thank god some people still remember how good rock in the 70's sounded

when everyone was still on drugs. Complete, balls out hard rock garage punk with a cover from Pink Floyd's first album (when Syd Barrett still made them cool). Loud squealing, glammy and crazy loose fun splashing all over the place. If you try hard enough, you can imagine these guys shooting up backstage at Max's Kansas City with the New York Dolls and the Dictators. Intense trebly punk with almost no time to catch your breath. dup

F-Minus "F-Minus" (Hellcat) CD- F-Minus are four seriously angry punks who have stamped out a new soundtrack for nihilism. From what I can tell, these guys refuse to believe in anything. Imagine that! Twenty tracks in seventeen minutes makes for a pretty standard fast and furious punk rock escapade. Distinguishing features are a smattering of charged-up female vocals and a very Rancid-esque layout. Unfortunately, a very Rancid-esque layout has never been enough to make any album a winner. But, if you are into punk rock and anger, check this out. AP

The For Carnation (Touch & Go) CD- I put this on last night while working on the second to last English paper I will ever have to do and, barn! I was asleep. I woke up about 45 minutes later to find the remnants of this CD still droning in my ears. That may sound like a negative way to start a review but I mean that in a good way. Dark, heavy, and brooding music for indie rockers bored with emo and looking to get into the more electronic sounds the underground has to offer. Imagine if Leonard Cohen were still around and he started a trip-hop band that mixed the most surreal aspects of Karate and Massive Attack, then you might be starting to come close to an adequate comparison to the For Carnation. The slow, thick-as-fuck basslines that underline the entire record combined with occasional drum beats and guitar samples make for an interesting listen at worst, and the soundtrack to a slow, primal love making session at best. Recommended. RS

For the Living "Bridges Burned" (Good Life) CD- Good Life Recordings chose to describe For the Living as "non-generic hardcore", whereas I think I would have chosen to describe them as "generic hardcore" or "really generic hardcore". There is nothing progressive about the music or the lyrics on this album. Every song they play, you've heard a hundred times, and everything they say, you've heard that many or more. Perhaps several years ago they could have carried the "non-generic" torch, but so many bands have pushed songwriting past the point that For the Living is at, that the best label available for their music is "standard" (which is a nice way of saying the g-word). If you liked hardcore in 1992, and then you were in a coma for eight years, buy this album. It rocks. AP

Fracture (No Idea) CD- Hey, this is Atom's old band! Atom, from Atom & His Package! Let's be honest here: probably 90% of the people who pick up this Pennsylvania band's discography (they played from 1991-1995, which makes them virtual dinosaurs in the memory-deficient world of indie rock) are doing so because their interest has been piqued by the success and fame of everybody's favorite keyboard-wielding nerd-rocker. For those of you expecting Atom redux, don't get your hopes up - this is far punkier and straight-laced, although it rocks considerably. Still, you can hear Atom's trademark

croak (and I mean that in the best way) on some of the songs, such as "Marth (the Dancing Hippo)," in which he launches into a seemingly impromptu rendition of "Leaving on a Jet Plane." This album could be viewed as a historical relic meant primarily for collectors, or as a work of genuine quality in its own right. I'd argue that it's the latter. DF

Frodus/Atomic Fireball (Lovitt) 7"- This seven inch is another example of two bands covering each other's songs. The first example I remember of this is the Coalesce/Get Up Kids seven inch which I felt was phenomenal. However, following attempts at this concept haven't been quite as successful in my opinion. The main difference between that 7" and this one is that I am not nearly as familiar with Frodus and Atomic Fireball as the aforementioned bands and I think being familiar with the original version can help you understand where each band is coming from. The Frodus song sounds like loud abrasive rock. Very gritty, dirty and not a typical Frodus song (which makes sense since they are covering Atomic Fireball, right?) While the Frodus song didn't really stand out, I thought the Atomic Fireball song was much better. This brought me to a very complex question, who should get the credit for this song? I liked the Atomic Fireball song better, but it was written by Frodus and I didn't like the song AF wrote themselves. However AF did perform it so they should get some credit. After pondering this for a while I realized, who really cares? If you like both of these bands it's probably cool to hear them covering each other but if you're not familiar with them I think an earlier release from either band would be a better introduction. JB

The Frustrators "Bored In The USA" (Adeline) CD- One member of Green Day, two from Waterdog and one from an act called Violent Anal Death. Catchy rock n' punk that you'd expect from the label, with a bit more audio honesty than a lot of what you'd expect from anything having to do with Green Day. 8 tracks with a cover of Blondie's "Living In The Real World." Good for classic, even keel punk rock with that 70's feel. dup

Funeral Oration "Discography" (Hopeless) 2XCD- Alright. Pupils, get out your chalk, step up to the blackboard, and write the following statement ten times in your best cursive: "Discographies are a right, not a privilege." And that goes double for two-CD discographies. I don't say this to belittle Dutch punk rockers Funeral Oration, who for as long as I can remember have been members of that pantheon of good-but-not-great Bad Religion soundalikes. But what, besides the packrat's urge to collect, is the inspiration for this 48-song career-spanning retrospective? Funeral Oration have been around for fifteen years, and during this time they've accumulated a healthy handful of releases, but I'm still not sure if there's going to be much of a target market for this release, particularly considering that disc 2 is entirely culled from live recordings. The singer's voice approximates Jello Biafra's warble in a pretty cool way, but besides that this is pretty middle-of-the-road punk. One CD would have sufficed. DF

Fury of Five "This Time It's Personal" (Victory) CD- I've got to say, at least the liner notes to this one kept me laughing. "A look, a stare, an attitude, see ya pal." "This is the band that took no shit from anybody." "But when you

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live by the sword, of course you die by the sword as well." Ah, a band that knows how to treat others. And no joke, I openly wept when the manager wrote that this could be the last thing this band ever puts out. Sniff. Anyway, this is really bad tough guy hardcore with metal leanings (especially the horrendous guitar solos) and a disturbing penchant for the whole rap/rock thing. I could easily see these guys touring with Limp Bizkit (and to their credit, kicking Fred Durst's ass). If this is what testosterone sounds like, call me a nancy boy, but I'm throwing in Belle & Sebastian. Oh, and be sure to catch this band live, as I'm positive they tear it up; just don't make fun of their haircuts or tats, or they'll have to beat you down. Represent. JM

Gameface/Errortype:11 "What's up, Bro?"

(Revelation) CD- Let's say you really like pop-music, like the kind played over collage-shot romance scenes where couples cook and paint and walk dogs together. You are going to love this. Let's say you were really into Texas is the Reason, and you wouldn't have minded them turning into big wusses and continuing to play rock and roll. You are going to love this. Let's say you really like Matchbox 20.... The production of this album is great, the songs recorded really well to compliment the fact that they are written really catchy. Those who are tired of indie-pop might want to avoid this album. For those who can't get enough of it, the only downside is there are just two originals and a cover by each band. I got over it. AP

Gamits "Endorsed By You" (Suburban Home) CD- One day, my friends, this ridiculous torrent of indistinguishable pop punk mediocrity will stop and poor fools like myself who love punk rock and simultaneously love good power pop will no longer feel bad saying that records such as The Gamits are ok. OK never really cut it, now did it? Oh, my aching heart. dup

Garrison "A Mile In Cold Water" (Revelation) CD- It's a mystery to me how this band managed to get signed to Revelation. Just when it seemed like Revelation was putting out good records again, like Elliot and Drowningman, they decide to put out this crap. I saw these guys live at CMJ and thought maybe they were just having an off night, but apparently they were supposed to sound like they did: not good. The first problem with this band is that they don't seem to understand how to sing their harmonies in key (especially live). The second problem is that there is really nothing original or slightly redeeming about this release. These guys sound like a high school emo band who listens to way too much Juliana Theory and Gameface. It's the same emo riffs you've heard a thousand times rehashed, and played with less skill than most bands in this genre. Maybe this album is a sign that the "emo revolution" needs to come to an end, or maybe this just sucks. Either way avoid this at all costs. JB

Gauge "I" (Tree) CD- I really like the idea behind the newest discography to hit the LOI mailbox. Unlike the majority of the discographies we get of bands that existed for far too long in the first place, Gauge's does not claim that they were the best band ever or even that many people really cared. Instead, Ken Shipley- the nice guy who runs Tree- simply

states that he felt that Gauge was the most amazing band no one ever heard. My only problem with the finished product is that it seems to be sort of a you-had-to-be-there type thing. Sure Gauge was playing spastic emo in the classic midwestern style before the region had any sort of style to speak of, but I am sure that this is the type of music that was much more effective, and poignant as well, when standing five feet away from them rocking out. Musically they sound like sort of the bastard son of Fugazi and Braid if you see that one. In other words, they've got the longing, discordant melodies of Fugazi mixed with the light and flowing sound of Braid. Pretty good stuff, but I'm still not sure if this is going to fall on deaf ears. Translation: you've already waited a good 7 or 8 years for these songs to come out, I think you can wait a little longer. RS

The Gazillions "Have Landed" (Round) CD- Remember the Dead Milkmen? Even though their music didn't really stand out from the crowd, their humorous lyrics and sharp wit kept you laughing long after you had stopped listening to the record. Now stop and imagine what the Dead Milkmen would sound like if they just weren't funny. I don't mean kind of unfunny, I mean unfunny in the sense that they make the Wayans Brothers look like Jerry Seinfeld. Now just add a little bit of David Bowie influenced rock and you have the Gazillions. Need some specific examples? How about song titles like "Hobbit Love," "All The Kids Are Eating Prunes," and "Jimmy Carter Meets the Killer Rabbit." Speaking of Jimmy Carter, the Gazillions seem to have a genuine obsession with him since he is featured on the cover of the album and thanked in the liner notes. I have an idea, instead of drooling over ex-presidents these guys should watch some more Saturday Night Live reruns and learn that hobbits just aren't funny. Evidently the Gazillions "have landed," I just wish they would go back to wherever the hell they came from. Bon voyage. JB

Geoff Farina (Southern) 7"- Geoff Farina plays acoustic folk music in a really laid back mellow style. This reminds me of Counting Crows unplugged or something in a similar style. There are some cool lead guitar parts that complement the acoustic strumming pretty well. This is pretty repetitive but I think that is more of a stylistic trait than a lack of originality, but to be honest I am not used to reviewing folk music. If you like modern rock with an acoustic feel you should like this because the song writing is pretty good. If you're an indie rocker like most of the people reading this I would skip this and listen to Elliot Smith or someone with a more brooding and with an emotional level added to the basic acoustic ballad. If coffee shop rock is your cup of tea then this may be for you. It is, however, not for me. JB

Golden "Summer" (Slowdime) CD- There is nothing to go on here. Let me tell you what I'm looking at. The digipak for this disc has a picture of the band set up in front of a mountain. The back has the same picture, shot from about 50 feet back in a similar locale. The song titles are listed here. The inside has a picture of the bands' faces, all wearing sunglasses looking up into the sky together (ala Kraftwerk). There is an address for the label here, and photo/recording credits. Oh, how snide and clever this band is. They have made such a statement with this packaging. Let me tell you

what I'm hearing- track one is over a minute of silence and some completely meaningless guitar strumming. Track 2 starts into awful wankery progressive rock that remained instrumental until someone started singing and it all turned into a remake of some shitty jazz-rock fusion act of the 70's. Why did I sit through this? If you go to a music school, you probably love these guys and can explain precisely how "advanced" they are. Oh-apparently this band is called Golden, and this record is called Golden Summer. Thanks for not sending any bio info either. I feel like I've been had. This is crap. dup

Good Clean Fun "On the Streets" (Phyte) CD-

I may be the only one to say this- as I seem to be among the more jaded of zine editors in America- but I think that Good Clean Fun's appeal is getting a bit old. I mean, the songs on this record, their first full length, are very good but there is very little that sets them apart from last year's "Shopping for a Crew" CD in both musicality and subject. Sure the message is great, and quite funny as well, but really how much can one band do with youth crew hardcore? Oh wait, I think that's the point. What really makes this CD interesting are the hardcore-jokes they pull mid-songs. For instance, the hardline spoof "In Defense of All Life" really had me bouncing in my chair, and the intro to "WWZD" which not-so-subtly pokes fun at "The New Noise" by Refused was quite clever. Let's put it this way, if you love your youth crew hardcore and find that it takes itself way too seriously, then check this out. If, on the other hand, you're not sure if you want to buy two GCF records that are virtually the same, then you might want to just pick one. RS

Good Riddance "The Phenomenon of Craving" (Fat Wreck) CD-

I remember the first time I saw Good Riddance. It was 4 or 5 years ago and they played in Cleveland with Down By Law and Millencolin. It was one of my first punk shows and I remember I was amazed by the energy and fury that Good Riddance put into their songs. Their first 2 CD's were great and captured that energy and emotion really well. Subsequent albums haven't fared as well in my opinion. This album continues the downward trend that Good Riddance has been on for the last few years. For some reason they feel they need to try to sound like Black Flag and other old school hardcore bands, instead of sticking to their own unique brand of punk and hardcore which is what made them such a good band in the first place. I don't know if this is a conscious decision to retain some shred of punk credibility or if they think this stuff sounds good, but I don't think it works at all. Not to say that this EP is all bad, "One for the Braves" and "Start at Zero" are perfect examples of Good Riddance's ability to write catchy songs and straddle the border between punk and hardcore. Unfortunately these two songs are exceptions to the remaining four songs which aren't horrible, but just don't live up to this band's earlier material or full potential. It's evident these guys can still write good songs, I just think they need to evaluate what direction they want to pursue, and soon. A few more mediocre releases like "Phenomenon of Craving" and it could be good riddance to these Californians forever. JB

Grade/Believe (Workshop) CD- I would see this at shows back in the day and I never picked it up. Of course the second I figured out how rad Grade was, it disappeared. Well, the nice people at Workshop Records have re-released it for all us boneheads that missed it the first time. And what a treat this is, the Grade here are

more metal than I have heard them, yet still have an amazing knack at that melodic thing as well. Kyle's voice isn't as out of control, but this is before he had all the practice, so some slack must be cut. The nicest surprise, though, was how good the Believe songs are. Granted, they sound a lot like Grade (they shared two members at this point), but there's a little Morning Again style hardcore added to the mix. Believe also has that great ear for melody, and that's what keeps this out of the "heard that before" bin. I'm psyched to finally have this fine CD, even if it is 6 years after the fact (holy shit). JM

Graig Markel "Verses On Venus" (Mag Wheel/Recovery) CD-

Mag Wheel seems to ride nicely on the trail of work that the members of New Sweet Breath. The Tagging Satellites record was very interesting, and this is the second solo record by their singer. Breathy, simple 70's AM pop with pretty, stark production, it has this cool, pale soul feel to it that at best sounds like the Style Council. It's not bad, but material like this takes balls. You need to try hard to do it without a knowledgeable lounge set in cheek, and egotistic balladry like this needs a confident attitude, especially considering how bad white r&b often sounds. Material like this also reminds me of Chisel's Ted Leo solo work. All in all a good sound when you're in the mood for temperamental brooding music. dup

Greetings From Joon "Static To The Homeland" (Goodbye Blue Skies) CD-

It doesn't take much to differentiate a bad emo disc from a good emo disc. A good layout, a particular guitar solo, bribery, whatever; all of these can make or break a group of albums that sound similar. Greetings From Joon make themselves known by juxtaposing straight up emo with odd found sound samples, tape manipulation, even radio static. Without these important elements, this would be just another bunch of whiney white guys doing the slow-tempo, the lyrics about girls breaking your heart, and the screamed backup vocals. Somehow, these samples make everything else sound new. I like this a lot, though I could do without the band thanking God (give me a break). JM

Grief "...and man will become the hunted" (Pessimiser) CD- Grief plays really slow. Like, REALLY slow. About fifty beats per minute. It could put you to sleep, that is if there weren't two metal guys with really metal hair screeching really metal lyrics about how mankind is ruining the world. This album is really metal. There is almost a radical environmental overture (maybe only locatable in a desperate search for politics), but song titles like "Hurricane Jello" and lyrics like "I used to run free, now you want to eat me...why don't you eat yourself...I am an ostrich" make certain that you don't take the record too seriously. But be careful. These guys have sharp and pointy guitars. AP

Groovie Ghoulies "Travels with My Amp" (Lookout!) CD-

I remember seeing the Groovie Ghoulies play with the Queers years ago and to be honest I wasn't really impressed. I mean, it was cool that they dressed up like monsters and threw candy into the crowd but I couldn't help but think they were a little too juvenile for my tastes (I was 15 at the time). The main problem I had with them was the

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fact that I really wasn't blown away by their music. Flash to the year 2000 and here I am reviewing the Groovie Ghoulies brand new album. I was caught off guard by the surprisingly well done surf punk tune that starts this record out. Could the Groovie Ghoulies have abandoned their Ramones inspired punk rock tunes to play instrumental surf punk? Would they still be able to dress up like monsters or would they now have to dress up like surfboards or something? The answer became clear as soon as the 2nd track began and I couldn't tell if I was listening to the Ramones or the Groovie Ghoulies. Hell, I like the Ramones as much as anyone else, I just wish this band could add the same unique look they have on stage to their music. There are other surf riffs mixed into the music which really adds to their sound, but for the most part this is pretty straightforward punk rock. I would save the ten bucks you would spend on this CD and instead spend it on a ticket next time this band comes to town because they really need to be seen live to understand what they're about. There are some good ideas on this CD, and hopefully they can have a little more originality and diversity in the song writing on their next release. If this band spent a little more time writing songs and combined this with their energetic live show, they could be something really special. JB

Hefner "Boxing Hefner" (Too Pure) CD- This disc is pretty laid-back and kind of European sounding, a possible result of the band being from London, which is in Europe. The rock songs are surfy old-school rock and roll in that "Pet Sounds" era Beach Boys way that the hipsters go nuts for these days. The ballads sound a little like Belle and Sebastian (actually a lot like Belle and Sebastian). The lyrics are pretty inconsistent: sometimes thoughtful and artsy, sometimes not. If you like indie folk-rock tunes that are easy on the ears, yet still all about girls and doin' it, this may be a good disc to add to your collection of indie folk-rock discs. Not bad. AP

Himsa "Ground Breaking Ceremony" (Revelation) CD- When I first put this in my CD player it sounded like it was skipping like crazy. I took it out and looked at it and it looked fine, but the first song was still skipping. So finally I listened to the first song and after 10 seconds the skipping stopped and they started playing... pretty sneaky trick. Luckily this is good enough that maybe I can overlook the time I spent trying to figure out what was wrong with my CD player. Himsa play crazy metal in the vein of the Swarm or the Locust. Not your standard boring chugga-chugga metal, this is the "real deal" kids. However, just when you aren't expecting it they throw in a melodic singing part (a la Grade) to keep things interesting. The singing voice isn't great but it's a nice break from the chaotic screaming vocals that dominate most of the recording. What stuck out about this record the most was the quality of the recording. Everything sounds really great and it definitely adds to the sound, keeping everything distinct and not just creating a wall of noise. While this definitely isn't my favorite genre of music Himsa use lots of effects and other techniques to sound different than every other Disembodied or Brother's Keeper clone. I personally wouldn't buy this but if you like the metal thing and are sick of hearing the same open E riffs over and over do yourself a favor and check this out. JB

Homemade "What Were We Into, Before We Were Into This?" (Theologian) CD- I don't know, at one point Theologian only seemed to put out punk that sounded exactly like Pennywise. And it is good that this doesn't. However, Homemade have somehow managed to dilute a distant remnant of posh-hardcore and mix it with an all-too superficial pop. It's actually remarkable how slick and streamlined this record sounds, as if they put no effort into it at all- I'm sure they did and that makes it that much more sad. Manufactured pop-punk/skate-punk that proves exactly how homogeneous and crowded the style has become. Sorry fellas. dup

Hopelifter "The Anthem" (No Theory) CD- I was really impressed when I first popped this in the stereo. It was really catchy and had a lot of great energy. But something bothered me about this, they sounded exactly like another band. This nagging question was in the back of my mind while I worked the next day. As I was putting CD's back on the shelf at the record store where I work this summer, I couldn't stop trying to figure out who this elusive band was that they sounded like. Then finally out of nowhere it hit me, this band sounds exactly like Screw 32. If I had never heard Screw 32 or they never existed I would think this band was incredible. Unfortunately for Hopelifter, Screw 32 did exist and therefore I cannot endorse this record as much as I normally would. Yeah they are from California and tons of bands play this style, but as tight as these guys are their main problem is that they don't really add their own personality to the songs. Bands like Ignite or Pennywise at least take the "West Coast" punk sound and add their own influences and style, while these guys pretty much stick to the standard formula. Maybe if these guys tried to mix it up a little bit and added a dose of creativity they could make something great, but this is just too generic. Don't get me wrong, this is still a decent record and I'm sure these guys are good live, but the Screw 32 thing still really bugs me. Go figure. JB

Hopewell "Words I Meant to Say" (Seasonal Affect) CD- Hmm, this is the kind of record I would have freaked-out over about 4 years ago. Back then, Hopewell would surely be legends for a long time to come with this recording. Now, they tend to blend into a thickly packed shelf with Lifetime, Empire State Games, and Saves the Day. It's not bad stuff, and I like their take on melodic straight-ahead hardcore in a bit of a darker way than Lifetime or Saves the Day ever saw the style. However, I think their songs can be accused of not being as interesting or as fun as Lifetime or Saves the Day. In fact, they're not very catchy at all. Good stuff, not great. I'd like to hear them again in a year or so. RS

Hunter-Gatherer/Rydell (Scene Police) CD- Hunter-Gatherer, a pretty novel name for a band, do the dual vocal emo thing pretty well (weak & touchy alongside hard & gruff). Sound like a more deliberate, less rushed Hot Water Music at times, and a decent pop band at others, Weak N' Touchy's voice is seriously off when not balanced out with Hard N' Gruff. Maybe it's a Spy Vs. Spy type of thing, or perhaps they should try to inbreed one singer with more-well rounded vocal chords. The UK-based Rydell shows more polish from the get-go, with

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pretty guitar work that's just enough to grace the surface of simple rhythm arrangements. The vocals retain the slight edge of raspiness to make one envision a coffeehouse poet ranting in the best possible way. Great emo-the Brits win by far. 3 tracks each. dup

Husking Bee "The Sun and The Moon" (Doghouse) CDep- There is nothing wrong with this album, per se. It's got those sincere, whiny emo lyrics, one acoustic song, and even a fast song to make things interesting. It's just that is sounds like everything else out there, which is more of a crime when it's imported from outside the US (in this case, Japan). I can find this in my own backyard. Why couldn't this band take their culture and their experiences and add it to the emo cake to come out with something more interesting that none of us have heard before? Because all I got here is plain white cake, with only a hint of a Japanese accent and one song in Japanese (the rest are in, you guessed it, English). Here's hoping the next one has a little extra kick to something, anything. JM

Ida "Will You Find Me?" (Insound) CD- Even though the Ida show I saw a few weeks ago was hopelessly boring, I still like Ida. Even though this band never returned the 200+ e-mails and phone calls I sent them for interview requests, I still like Ida. Even though I'm probably a bit young for Liz, the devastatingly beautiful co-leader of this band, I still like Ida. Even though this album is so much softer, more monotonous, and even a bit wimpy than 1996's terrific "I Know About You," I still like Ida. RS

Idle Hands "Treaty" (Trustkill) CDep- Yes, Meaghan from Copper is finally back and it's not the silly sappy emo stuff she did with her previous band. Having relocated to SoCal, her new band, incorporating members of Suburban Empire, is fast and melodic in a not quite punk, not quite emo way, and let me tell you, it rocks. Meaghan always had a great voice, but this time armed with a vicious power-chord attack she has never been showcased better. I'm sure Meaghan would be dismayed that everyone will inevitably call this her band 'cause the driving rhythm section is really what makes this band so dynamic. Plus, who ever thought the label that brought Brother's Keeper to the world would be into this stuff? But if Trustkill keeps putting this kind of stuff out then you won't hear me complaining a bit. RS

Index For Potential Suicide "The Newest Youth Rebellion" (Ohev) CD- Take your average, hardcore-thrash-speed-power-violence-whatever band (any Slap-a-Ham act will do) and add in one guy who knows his synthesizers. Suddenly, you don't sound like everyone else screaming until their kidneys hurt. You might also imagine if Man Or Astroman did Spazz covers. Good use of dramatics and the occasional slow part. IFPS is more proof that keyboards belong everywhere. Extra points for the sample of your boy Christian Slater in "Pump Up The Volume." dup

The (International) Noise Conspiracy "Survival Sickness" (Epitaph/Burning Heart) CD- Here's another neat product of Sweden. The INC does what more bands should probably be doing. They combine danceable music (a kind of Doors meet Mudhoney sound), with a pretty intense political agenda. It's fun to imagine frat party goers dancing the night away

to blaring anti-capitalist anthems. That might be a bit of a stretch since the Mudhoney aspect of the band makes it a little more abrasive than most sorority girls are apt to appreciate, but there's no questioning the ability of the record to make one shake his/her moneymaker (subtle capitalist joke). Another cool thing about this record is the liner-notes. A disclaimer on the first page warns the reader that no lyrics are included, but that explanations of each of the songs is enclosed. Initially, I thought this was kind of cheesy and lame, very Operation: Cliff Clavin. But the explanations aren't sterile and obvious, in fact, they're really engaging and interactive. The INC does a great job of using both the musical and written media to communicate with their audience. This is a very creative record with original approaches to both songwriting and layout. If you are interested in something interesting, check it out. Oh yeah, features ex-members of Refused and the Doughnuts. AP

Jackie Papers "I'm In Love" (Panic Button) CDep- "Nyahhh, nyahah"-voiced punk from the singer of famed Florida punks The Pink Lincolns. Good, rock-styled punk in the vein of the Vindictives. Chris Barrows sings like he's teaching the microphone a lesson, and that alone is pretty fun to listen to. Kudos to them for reversing the all-girl-band-with guy-drummer style, as Chris (a man) is backed by a female 3 piece. dup

Jackpot "Weightless" (Future Farmer) CD- Decent country-rock stuff, that's held back by the silly lyrics about college girls, tits being too small, and whatnot. They kinda remind me of Dash Rip Rock in that, but you can take DRR a bit more seriously. But the record picks up on track 3 wherein, they pull their roots up and start to get a little louder and not as dumb. For fans of light hearted alt country. The bio has some inexplicable connection between them and Cake, for whatever it's worth. dup

Jen Wood "The Uncontainable Light" (Tree) CDep- The review staff at LOI is often accused of having an acute distaste for types of music without crunchy power-chords or screamy chaos on the surface of the music. Thus, they say, we overlook more subtle, quiet music in the stead of punk rawk. I don't know why they say this, as our fourth issue featured Elliott Smith on the cover and as the central interview. Plus, I generally think of zines like Status, Eventide, and Muddle—all very good publications—as having a much more narrow sound than we do. So, as a smack in the face to all those who think us to be bullish and stubborn in our quarterly musical selections I am going to say that this EP by Jen Wood is wonderful. Filled with lush acoustic melodies and dreamy vocal harmonies all the while accented by steady drum-beats, this EP is nothing less than the perfect remedy for a dull summer's day. I really liked Jen's last CD on Tree, but thought it was a bit too lo-fi and minimalist for my tastes (maybe the naysayers have a point there). However, this disc returns to the vibe of Jen's earlier Tattle Tale stuff in that it is a bit more dynamic and a bit more, well... produced, for lack of a better term. Jen may be the next Mary Lou Lord. RS

Jeweled Handles (Sixgunlover) CDep- The whole thing about instrumental music is that the music is supposed to be interesting enough to not need vocals. This CD, on the other

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hand, had me continually asking, "When is someone going to start singing?" It just felt like it was missing something, an extra layer like vocals. It's not bad for instrumental rock with a touch of jazz flavor; there are some great threads throughout it. It's just that the songs were a little too monotonous and without drive, it felt like the band was warming up before the singer was done gargling salt water or whatever. I think, though, that the next one might pull off something more compelling, so I will keep my eyes open. Promise. JM

Jimmies "Let The Fat Man Plunder" (Panic Button/Lookout!) CD- Sometimes acts like this are great. The Jimmies sound like they focused on the lighter, ballad side of the Ramones (like, "I Want You Around") and made it their style. Not too fierce vocally, and quick punk rock n' roll to back it up. Better than the people who imitate the general Ramones sound anyway. But this is definitely proficient rock and roll, played in a classic style. And no matter how many times I hear it done the exact same way, punk rock like this still sounds good. dup

The Judas Factor "Kiss Suicide" (Revelation) CDep- I was not impressed with the last Judas Factor CD, and my feelings haven't changed greatly since then. Granted, this is loud and insane, and it's guaranteed to wake you up on a Sunday morning. But the press release tries to paint this band like they are bringing art and intelligence into hardcore. And while there is a technical aspect to this that never goes into the wacky side of things, this doesn't sound that much different than the thousands of other hardcore bands out there. This isn't that bad, but I can't help but laugh when reading the press release. "A dizzying tomato of sounds and ideas." Please, and the guys in Hatebreed are going to put out a book of hardcore poetry soon. JM

Jud Jud "No Tolerance For Instruments" (Schematics) 7"- For anyone not familiar with Jud Jud let me attempt to explain this duo. Remember when Beavis and Butt-head used to daydream that they were rock stars, but all they did was stand there and sing metal riffs. Just imagine instead of singing Black Sabbath they were hardcore kids, and you have Jud Jud. I actually heard these guys a while back on the Florida 403 Comp and thought the song was pretty funny. This seven inch is more of the same with song titles that indicate the basis of the songs such as "X Double Bass Song X" or the aforementioned compilation song, "X Wah Wah Song X." The problem with this seven inch is that this gets boring...fast. It's funny at first but I can't take more than 3 or 4 songs. While this is obviously a novelty, it just isn't fun to listen to after more than a few minutes because although this guys try their best to change from song to song there isn't very much variation you can do singing guitar riffs. However, this thing isn't all bad. The cover art is a pretty funny parody of the cover for the classic youth crew album "Speak Out" by Bold. These guys have a good sense of humor, and I could see myself putting a song or two of this on a comp tape. Unfortunately, I can't in good conscience recommend anyone spend 3 bucks on this record. If novelty is your thing I would rather listen to Atom and His Package, but at least these guys are attempting some-

thing original. Maybe if they could add some more elements into the mix they could come out with something better. JB

Juliana Theory/One Line Drawing/ Grey AM "Three-Way Split" (One Day Savior) CD- I think this is the first time I've heard The Juliana Theory, Tooth and Nail's newest over-hyped rockers, and I have mixed feelings. Their song, "If I Told You This..." starts out great, like Sunny Day with more interesting vocals, but fails to go anywhere. Their next tune, "Variations on a Theme" simply sucks in that modern rock ballad way. The One Line Drawing song actually reminds me of Sensefield a bit, which I find really weird since Jonah's (the mastermind behind this band) full length sounded nothing like Sensefield. It's a pretty good tune, and was a nice segue between the subdued almost oppressed- sound of The Juliana Theory and the hard rocking Grey AM. This has to be the best stuff by the Grey AM, a band that plays emotional rock and roll with more energy and passion than most bands out there. They're like a tightly coiled spring with more and more kinetic energy with every hit of the snare drum. This tremendously underrated band clearly shines over the two overly-hyped bands they share the disc with. RS

K.C. Accidental "Anthems for the Could've Bin Pills" (Noise Factory) CD- It is my opinion that a band begins digging its own grave when it puts pretentious slogans like "saturation helps you breathe" in its layout. It is also my opinion that Nine Inch Nails already did the bunch-of-blank-tracks-before-the-song-starts trick. Well, for those of you who couldn't get enough of that, here it is again. This album is also for those of you who can't get enough of two guys and a lot of guests playing a lot of different instruments. With guitar, drums, bass, keys, some strings and brass, and a touch of effects processing, K.C. Accidental creates a very gentle, very soothing sound that guarantees not to offend the ears. These tunes are monotonous, but relaxing. You might want to do homework or fall asleep to "Anthems", but you would not want to operate heavy machinery to it. The song structure offers no verse/chorus/verse approach, but kind of evolves as the song progresses. Very repetitive. Very repetitive. But if you need some make-out music or you need to be sedated, this could be the ticket. AP

Keelhaul (Escape Artist) CD- Here we have a re-issue of Keelhaul's debut release. This band- a brooding, spastic, sonic locomotive- features ex-members of Craw and Integrity. Fortunately for us, the music sounds little like either band. As a matter of fact, I don't think I've ever heard music this pummeling or complex. But, that might be a bad thing as the songs tend to lose me in their complexity and the vocals sound like a dude playing bass while taking a shit. I'm sure there will be tons of kids that will be into this- and they'll all be in Italy or Germany or somewhere like that- as it has a distinct Relapse sound. I, on the other hand, can't quite get into it.... at all. RS

Kepler "This Heart is Painted On" (Spectra Sonic) CDep- Here are the problems with Kepler: 1) their soft parts sound painfully like Ida, and while Ida is a wonderful band Kepler can't quite keep me interested as long; 2) the mix of sounds on this record, usually more tame, has so few dynamic aspects that I tend

to forget the music is on and fall asleep; 3) their soft parts sound painfully like the Rachels, and while the Rachels are a great band Kepler can't quite keep me interested as long; 4) this is painfully boring. RS

Kevlar "Let Me Worry Some More" (The First Time) CD- I like this band. I will say, for simplicity's sake, that they remind me a bit of a Swedish Superchunk. Original and involved lyrics set to catchy rock tunes with emo tendencies. There's not a whole lot that's original going on musically with this record, but the songs are good, very well recorded, and generally agreeable. My favorite aspect of the album is that it exhibits a pretty standard emo/indie sound, but none of the songs are about girls, thus illustrating that there are things to be emotional about other than not scoring. Why is it that Sweden has been so busy pumping out independent rock bands with good ideas like that while, in America, even our best metal bands sing about nothing but love-life problems? I don't know. Maybe Swedish boys don't have that problem because their cute accents make them irresistible to women. AP

Kid Dynamite "Shorter, Faster, Louder" (Jade Tree) CD- Dan Yemen, guitarist of this now defunct Philadelphia powerhouse, is quite possibly hardcore's master of the minute-and-a-half power-punk song. Combining melody and tons of catchiness with enough balls-to-the-wall drum beats to have you popping for weeks, Dan has it down pat. So, when Kid Dynamite proclaim this album to be "shorter, faster, and louder" well, there really isn't much difference between that and all his post-lifetime stuff. I guess that's what's bugging me about this record. While it is truly a gem in the today's neo-youth crew hardcore scene which often takes a back seat to the metalcore that seems to be all the rage, there is relatively little progress made from this album and KD's phenomenal debut record. I mean, I don't necessarily expect them to get all emo on us, but these songs could easily fit next to anything else the band has done. And, as I said before, this record is a very very strong piece of material- in which almost every song is a hit-, but I still feel that Kid Dynamite is singing the same old tune... no matter how delightful that tune may be. RS

Kill Sadie/Brand New Unit "split" (Modern Radio) 7"- Ok first let's face the facts, the layout on this baby is brilliant. This thing looks like it belongs in a museum or something, not on my turntable. Musically Kill Sadie didn't really impress me. They reminded me of earlier Grade and Converge material, which sounds good, but to be honest these guys just didn't pull it off too well. I wouldn't go writing these guys off though, because they definitely have some potential and I'd like to see what they can do in the future. Which brings us to Brand New Unit, who really blew me away. These guys reminded me of a cross between No Fun At All and Ignite. They generally play fast west coast punk rock with lots of energy, but that's not it. Every once in a while they break into an unexpected melodic punk breakdown to mix things up. This is really good, and I wish more bands would do this type because it's really fun to listen to. I could definitely see this band on Epitaph or something, because they remind me of someone that Epitaph would have signed in their heyday (translation: when they actually signed good bands). Anyways, this is a solid release and I think it's probably worth it since it only costs about as much as a gallon of gasoline nowadays. JB

Krakatoa "Channel Static Blackout" (Second Nature) CD- In the liner notes for this CD Krakatoa is described as the "side project that wouldn't die." Lucky for us they won't die, because this is some of the best metal I've heard in quite a while. While Krakatoa is made up from members of popular hardcore bands (including Dan the singer for the now defunct Harvest) there is nothing hardcore about this release. This is straight up metal which reminds me musically of Iron Maiden or In Flames. Everything is really technical, but not technical in a "wow, look how good we are" type of way (can you say Dillinger Escape Plan?). This is technical in a way that will appeal to anyone, even non-musicians because...well, because it just sounds great. The screamed vocals work really well with the music, and even the spoken word parts don't sound cheesy. If you're looking for that one record to appease the metal side that is within us all, look no further. Hail Krakatoa. JB

Krisiun "Conquerors of Armageddon" (Century Media) CD- First off I'd like to know why all metal bands feel they need to use that "metal" font that is impossible to read. Why to they do this? Is it peer pressure from their other metal friends? I don't know. Anyways, Krisiun should not be confused with the current breed of metal-hardcore bands like Hatebreed and Earth Crisis, because there is nothing hardcore about this. These guys are from Brazil (like Sepultura) and play metal in a somewhat similar style although a little bit more brutal. These guys are obviously very good musicians and are frighteningly tight, the only problem is that once the technical aspects wear off these guys are kind of boring. The drummer's rapid blast beats get tiresome song after song especially due to his lack of drum fills, and the songs tend to run together. However, this stuff is pretty brutal and kept my attention more than the typical metal CD. If you'd rather listen to Slayer than Saves the Day, check this out. Scary. JB

Lawrence Arms "Ghost Stories" (Asian Man) CD- Here we have the second edition of these ex-members of the Broadways. Honestly, I never saw what the big deal about the Broadways was. As a matter of fact, I'm not quite sure that anyone did, but I saw them in a bunch of zines a while back so I just figured someone liked them. I thought they were a bit too 15-ish for me. The Lawrence Arms, on the other hand, sound like "Unfun" era Jawbreaker without as much emotion. This is pretty good stuff actually. I imagine the lyrics are interesting and the layout is good too, but neither of those particular items came with my promo copy so I'll have to use my imagination. Not bad at all. RS

Leatherface "Horsebox" (BYO) CD- Most of you were probably introduced to Leatherface last summer when they graced the States to tour with Hot Water Music in support of their split CD. I'm sure I'm not alone when I say I was completely blown away when I saw this band live. The beautiful Husker Du-esque melodies, coupled with Frankie Stubbs' unique voice and the energy put into every chord made me rush to the back of the club to pick up the only CD they had, the album "Cherry Knowle" (recently re-released on BYO). This CD contained some of their earliest material and to my disappointment it did not capture what I had seen live. This was generic punk rock at its worst, but it hinted at good things to come. Luckily they nailed their live sound on this album and it shows that, just

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like wine, this band gets better with age. I know some people who don't like Stubbs' voice, and if I had to compare it to an inanimate object it would have to be sandpaper. However I think it's important to listen to the vocals in the context of the music because the dynamics work so well, and definitely bring this band to a new level. There isn't just one track that stands out on this album, there are just too many great songs. OK...I'm not sure if it was necessary to cover Tina Turner's "True Colours" but to be honest this band can really do no wrong in my book (aside from Cherry Knowle...). This is probably the best CD I've gotten to review in this entire issue, in other words ..BUY IT! JB

The Letter E (Tiger Style) CD- In 1997, a building in Manhattan burned down. No big deal, right? We can always build another building. To many of the musicians that practiced there, it was a big deal, and this EP is what came from a few people working through that loss. You can tell this is a eulogy, as the music is slightly contemplative and restrained. I can't help but notice that there is also a lot of hope in this music. This is instrumental music that is not trying to sell a soda or a political party; each song embodies a mood, with each repetition of melody bringing the listener closer to that tone. The Letter E is not that far removed from bands like Tristeza and The Album Leaf, which is all right with me. I'm not glad the building burned down, but I am glad that this impressive CD came from its ashes. JM

Liar "Deathrow Earth" (Good Life) CD- Let's start with the good aspects of this CD. These guys have some good statistics in the CD booklet about the abuse of women. Liar also strongly supports the vegetarian/vegan lifestyle. Getting to the music, Liar like a mix between newer Death material and old Slayer. Vocally the singer sounds alot like Chuck from Death aside from the occasional sung part. When I first put this on I thought "Oh great, another metal band from overseas," and began to write this band off as another Morning Again sound alike. However I decided to listen to this CD all the way through and I'm glad I did because Liar definitely has a lot going for them. Don't get me wrong I don't think that I would buy this, but this review was definitely periodically interrupted by uncontrolled head-banging. No jokes. Anyways if you want some good metal or just want to scare your parents pick up Liar. Bonus points for the slow, acoustic guitar intros... pure evil. JB

Lifter Puller "Fiestas & Fiascos" (Self-Starter Foundation/French Kiss) CD- If the members of Minneapolis band Lifter Puller have witnessed even a quarter as much debauchery as they chronicle on "Fiestas & Fiascos," then it shouldn't be long until Charles Bukowski starts calling them up for poem ideas (oh wait, he's dead). And Lifter Puller's songs - raw, sexy, tense, and drug-addled as they are - are nonetheless poetry, the type of stuff you listen to over and over not only because it rocks, because also you want to catch - and remember - every lyric. Lifter Puller's singer growls in a deadpan voice, confessing tawdry stories centering around booze-filled nightclubs and cheap anonymous sex. Musically the band pulls out every trick in the book, combining tense, pounding guitars with everything from keyboards to saxophones to studio trickery like tape loops and strange audio effects. The production on this CD, thankfully, is top-notch,

as well it should be considering how talented and original - Lifter Puller sounds. This is dark, dirty, upsetting, and profoundly beautiful music. Very highly recommended. DF

The Lilies & Aspera Ad Astra "Split" (Tiger-style) CD- This is apparently the second release from Insound.com's label. If you aren't familiar with Insound, it's probably the first word in indie rock at this point as well as other such Underground styles that constitute the cutting edge. I was somewhat disappointed with the Lily's 4 songs here- I really enjoyed the more straight-up pop of "Better Can't Make Your Life Better." This record seems more intent on a very amorphous slow dreamy indiepop vibe while still retaining a bit of their shoegazer-y feel. Aspera Ad Astra really sound like they use keyboards, but there are none listed. Spacerock so layered they must use loads of pedals and effects live, with a 70's Bowie-ish feel to the vocals. It's got that lazy drone to it, but the guitars come in and provide a foundation to their entrancing waver. Good stuff if you can stand a bit of a head trip. On a side note, I wonder how many of the indie crowd understand that the name Tigerstyle is cribbed from the Wu Tang Clan? dup

Looper "The Geometrid" (Sub Pop) CD- Stuart David left the beautifully morose Belle & Sebastian for this, a side project that seems like it's just him on a computer instead of his wife and 2 others performing with him. Light, programmed tracks with lots of samples laced together and an overall cheery, quirky feel. It's funny, my first reaction to this record came as a huge sweeping comparison...conceptually Looper is to B&S as New Order is to Joy Division. Somehow I get the feeling that David wanted to uplift the spirit of his work a bit while still retaining a certain mood to it. It is hard to discern what is and isn't live on this record, but the samples are pretty fun to pick up - there's a song based entirely around a modern squelch. But one wonders why an act like this was worth taking on full time. They remind me of Art Of Noise, St. Etienne, Negativland and even Beats International at times, but not as interesting as, any of them. It's not at all bad, you have to wonder how many records like this a person can make. The greefully vague liner notes don't offer much of a clue where they're going with this, so I guess we'll have to wait. dup

Loose Lips "Talkin' Trash" (TKO) CD- Nice, dirty glam-punk in the NY Dolls style. Everything about these guys makes them seem like they should have been shooting heroin backstage at Max's Kansas City in 1975 with Richard Hell. Good enough for me. dup

The Low End Theory (Eulogy) CD- I was excited by the huge drums that introduce this album, and then kind of disappointed when the four chords kicked in and a voice identical to the guy's from F.Y.P. spilled from the singers nasal cavity (does anyone really like F.Y.P.)? The Low End Theory does a lot of stuff that the Get Up Kids do, with a slightly more raw sound, but their song-writing doesn't do much to hold the attention. If you like the Get Up Kids, which everyone does, and you don't mind a different kind of whining accompanying your pop tunes, give this record a shot. It's got enough rock potential to warrant a place in any GUK fan's collection. AP

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Jason Murphy: JM
Adam Parks: AP

Mad Drama (Max Power) 7"- I know what you're all wondering, and no I can't think of a worse band name off the top of my head. All jokes aside this band is really good. They play melodic pop punk with a big hardcore influence and remind me of Lagwagon. They have a ton of speed changes and some pretty complex guitar parts that sound really tight. These guys even have Iron Maiden style guitar solos, which is always a plus. I'm surprised that these guys haven't gotten signed yet and I could see them going pretty far with their unique brand of punk/metal/hardcore. If you're tired of hearing the same old punk stuff pick this up and listen to one band who has the ambition to do something different. Still not convinced? The 7" comes with free stickers, and you know how much you love free stickers don't you? Buy it now. Why are you still reading this? Get your ass to the record store and plunk down your three bucks for this, it's worth it. JB

Maharajah "Chapter One: The Descent" (Now Or Never) CD- The second I threw this on, I thought of early Converge and Torn Apart. But then again, I rather enjoy both those bands, so then all was good. This stuff is really crazy, just the way you like it: crunchy metal guitars, seemingly chaotic time changes, and vocals that sound like they can peel paint off your car. Even when the sound slows down for a second, the listener still doesn't get a break, because those moments are just as intense. And as with many releases of this genre, the CD layout is beautiful in a disturbing metal way. Oh yes, this release will wake your scrawny ass up and make it squirm in a good way. JM

Make Lisa Rich "Another Venus" (Boy Love) CD- The first two or three times I listened to this record, something really nagged me about the first song, "Fetish." Then it suddenly hit me: the melody for the verses it's from Nirvana! I'll be damned if I can remember what song it is... something off of "Incesticide"..."Molly's Lips," maybe? Well, no matter, the song is a dead ringer for Nirvana. Otherwise, "Another Venus" is an album of competent, new wave influenced pop-rock that could benefit from slightly glossier production but is otherwise fairly listenable. The band's press sheet cites Elvis Costello and Joe Jackson as primary influences, and I'm willing to buy that. But the music has a little bit more of a "modern rock radio" sound than I would expect someone like Costello to deliver. DF

Matt Pond PA "Measure" (File 13) CD- Subtle, indie pop with a lazily dramatic mournfulness that has come back into fashion of late. Matt Pond (an actual being on vocals, keys and guitar) is backed by guitar, bass, cello, violin, horns and drums, which makes Matt Pond PA a band as well - the PA suffix reminds you they're from Philly. Dreamy stuff, it always perks up in the right places, so it's not as all-out dark as Nick Drake or Lambchop. Pond, it seems, cannot hide from vocal comparisons to Peter Gabriel, and that's entirely a good thing. His voice is centered perfectly, and the tense emotion it matches the sinewy texture of Gabriel's rather well. For fans of melancholic pop, and movies with happy endings. dup

Mechakucha "One Million Safe Hours" (Frenetic) CD- There are some labels out there that consistently put out shit. You know, boring, saying nothing punk that leaves any hip listener going, "oh my god, that is so early '90s" in a valley girl voice. Then there is Frenetic Records, a San Francisco label that generally releases records

by artists who are way over my head that leave me going, "um, I don't get it," as if the secret to life is embedded in the music and everyone but myself, well... gets it. Bands like Mechakucha are pretty prime territory for Frenetic. This band is abrasive, moody instrumental mathy-hardcore that I'm sure some people would find really cool, and travel to the ends of the earth to see this kind of grit churned out by the bucketfull. I, on the other hand, feel it's a bit over my head. I like my melodies cliche and my instrumental music soothing dammit. I can't see myself listening to this again as it's a bit too intelekshoal for me. I mean if calculus were music, then Mechakucha would be Sir Isaac fucking Newton, and some people really dig calculus. I, however, am not very good at advanced differential anything. RS

Meisha "Meisha Returns Meisha Forever" (MF) CD- I feel kind of stupid because I thought that this was going to be some kind of Integrity tribute band from their name. You know the beginning of "Those Who Fear Tomorrow" where Dwid shouts "Meisha"? Anyways, I doubt that Meisha ever heard of Integrity, let alone form a tribute band to them, but let's not hold that against them. This band reminds me of a more electronically charged Tristeza. The keyboards are the prominent instrument and the guitars mostly fill the background and it's a combination that seems to work well for Meisha. Did I forget to mention the booklet is covered with pages of really cool artwork painted by one of the band members? Look if this doesn't relax you take a Valium and call me in the morning. JM

The Mercury Program "from the vapor of gasoline" (Tiger Style) CD- I've never been much for instrumentals, especially on record, but I have to admit that this album is pretty hot. It's comprised mostly of bass, drums, guitar, and keys, but is highlighted with some very dynamic percussion, bell, and vibraphone parts, all complimented by a couple of vocal parts. A very benign indie sound that peaks with a few hard hits but never gets aggressive. What's impressive is the passion with which the band plays, a passion that can often be lost in a recording where there is no lead singer setting the mood. Props to both the band and Andy Baker, who recorded the album, for that accomplishment. Overall this is a really great record, fluctuating between soft and hard grooves enough to be the background music to a day's soundtrack, but original and engaging enough to just sit and listen. AP

Midtown- Save the World, Lose the Girl (Drive-Thru) CD- I really don't know where to start with this review. Should I start with the fact that according to the Midtown website if you buy the CD and send in the receipt you can win a DVD player? Or maybe I should start with the fact that this is really over-produced and sounds like it should be in the MTV buzz bin (does that still exist?) I could also comment on how horrible the title of this album is. However, I think what I would most like to talk about is the fact that this label Drive-Thru is partly-funded by MCA but claims they are still an indie label. I don't know about the rest of you but when a label is distributed by a major and gets all of their money from a major label I don't consider them indie anymore, sorry. It seems like the goal of Drive-Thru is to break emo into the mainstream and

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cash in on it disguised as an indie. Well I'm not falling for it and neither should you. Wait... I forgot to talk about the band. Midtown actually isn't bad and they are super catchy, but the whole Drive Thru thing keeps me from recommending to buy this record. Oh well, I guess I'll never get that DVD player. JB

m.i.j. "The Radio Goodnight" (Caulfield) CD- Thank god for promo sheets. I was about to rant and rave about the beautiful voice the female singer for m.i.j. possessed, until a second glance at the band's info sheet informed me that, in the words of Austin Powers, "it's a man, baby." Jeff Hanson may sing in a breathy falsetto, but what's incredible about his voice is that somehow he's able to mimic the quality of boy/girl vocal bands like Jejune or Rainer Maria without the help of another singer. And while his voice sounds "feminine," it doesn't do so in a squeaky or whiny way. Musically, m.i.j. takes the best aspects of the aforementioned bands and mixes in a bit of plaintive crooning, Sunny Day Real Estate-style. If I had to select the real musical winner on this CD (although the whole thing is eminently listenable from beginning to end), I'd have to go with "Sometimes in Sleep," a song whose quiet fragility provides a welcome break from the wailing guitars found elsewhere on the album. This is, without a doubt, the best thing I've heard from Caulfield to date. DF

Milk Cult "Project M-13" (0 to 1) CD- Milk Cult's brilliant "Project M-13" isn't just coming from left field. It's more as if they had hit a grand slam home run in the bottom of the ninth inning and a fan deep in the bleachers had caught the ball and then thrown it back into the outfield, clocking the left fielder right in the head and making him see little stars and cuckoo birds. That's the type of album this is. Somehow, miraculously, Milk Cult, a supergroup of sorts which counts among its members a number of San Francisco semi-stars who will go unnamed, got a grant from the French government to travel to Marseille and spend a month recording collaborative efforts with everybody ranging from a 30-piece African orchestra to hip-hop turntablists to a chanting Buddhist monk. Milk Cult then pared this month-long recording session into a single seamless album (actually, the first of two albums, with the second to come at some point in the future) that is completely and utterly original. And coming from a jaded music critic such as myself, that means a lot. This is such a far-out album that it's nearly captivating; the turn-table scratches and foreign chants and loungey guitars and industrial-edged bursts of noise contained herein make for some crazy music. Milk Cult might deny this comparison vehemently, but I even see an element of the abstract sound manipulation practiced by Olivia Tremor Control. Milk Cult are equal parts art terrorists and musical geniuses, and on "Project M-13" they give full reign to all their creative impulses, no matter how bizarre and fucked up they may be. DF

The Misfires "Dead End Expressway" (Modern Rock Radio) LP- While I was listening to this for the first time I was more intrigued trying to decipher the posters hanging on the walls of their practice spot in the insert, than in listening to the actual music. As you may have guessed, that is not a very good sign. The Misfires play a mix between pop-punk and straight up rock n roll, and unfortunately it just doesn't

do it for me. It's not that this is a bad record, it's just not terribly original or well done. While these guys seem into what they do, the guitar parts in the songs all follow the same basic formula, and it seems that these guys were more concerned with making sure the lyrics actually rhymed than if they were actually good. Let me give you an example, "hello son your mom's in jail grandma sold the car to pay her bail she got busted shoplifting she got busted with heroin." This is the first release by a label called Modern Rock Radio and I hate to discourage them, but they are going to need to do better. As for the Misfires maybe a little more time in the aforementioned practice spot could make them a good band, but this album was definitely, well, a misfire. JB

Month of Birthdays "Lost in the Translation" (Subjugation) CD- The gorgeous, minimalist braille cover art for Month of Birthdays' "Lost in the Translation" conceals an album that, while equally minimalist, is significantly less gorgeous. Poor recording quality and plodding chord arrangements add up to an album that is decidedly mediocre. I get the impression that Month of Birthdays are reaching for Joan of Arc, but they're falling way short. Disposable. DF

Mumm-Ra "Egyptian Tour 99" (Swashbucklin' Records) CD- I always enjoy getting demo CDs in the mail. It keeps me in touch with what's going on at a level below all the cliché stuff coming from the Revelations and Epitaphs of the world. Here we have 3 songs that clock in at about 6 minutes and I have to say this is pretty good. Of course, the definite advantage of the records Revelation and Epitaph put out is that you get first-class recording quality, and this release surely suffers from poor production (but I'd like to see any band on Rev or Epitaph get off their high horses and try recording with a 4-track). Other than that I find some remarkable melodic rock and roll in the vein of Lifetime or Saves the Day. I must admit, Brent, the singer's voice takes some time getting used to, and I'm not quite sure if it may be a bit too nasal for music of this quality, but overall I think this may be a band to watch out for. (1512 Slaterville Rd, Ithaca NY 14850) RS

My Complex "If We Keep Moving" (Headhunter/Cargo) CD- What can I say about a band that reminds me of Lifetime, The Get-Up Kids, and Cursive, all in under a half hour? Hell yeah! This is the stuff, running from fast punk songs to somber acoustic songs, and everywhere in-between. It's like a buffet; you get a little from here, you get a little from there, and somehow, your plate manages to walk together (unless it's a Bonanza, yuck). And that's it, being able to do a bunch of things and still have the whole thing come together for a cohesive album. Fill up my plate again! JM

My Hero Died Today (Schematics) CD- Could My Hero Died Today be the new millennium's answer to Chokehold? These guys remind me of a more technical Chokehold (well I guess that just about anything is more technical than Chokehold) along the lines of early Converge or Despair. While their music doesn't really stand out too much from the pack what I like about this band is the sense of urgency and conflict in the vocals. The vocalist reminds me a lot of Jeff Chokehold and you simply can't ignore what's going on vocally. To me it seems the

music is more a backdrop for the vocals on this album and that's good because the music isn't very strong overall. Come to think of it, I don't really feel too strongly either way about this record. My Hero Died Today is that one band you see at a fest that you thought was kinda good but you can't remember their name because there were too many other bands that sounded like them. Oh well...this is by no means essential to any record collection, save your cash for a Chokehold record. JB

National Skyline (Hidden Agenda) CD- Oh my gosh, this is incredible. Any kid who thinks emo is the way to go- with guitars a blaring and tears aflowing- perhaps it's time to up the ante and try some music that is as lush as it is surreal, soft as it is flowing, subtle as it is dreamy. This is the real deal, not the synthetic crap we get crammed down our throats all too often. Here we have ex-members of Hush giving us a digitized landscape not far off from the stuff Antarctica is doing. With wandering bass lines a plenty and vocals that bring to mind the more dreamy stuff of the Beach Boys or lighter side of Radiohead, this may be the next big thing. Perhaps not cheesy enough to garner mass success, this band is playing music so much more interesting than the usual glut of indie-post-rock today. This is the best CD I've heard all year and could be the most contemplative music I've heard all year. RS

Nerf Herder "How to Meet Girls" (Honest Don's) CD- "How to Meet Girls," Nerf Herder's impressive sophomore effort, cements their position as a criminally underrated pop-punk gem. In fact, it's not that hard to imagine an alternate reality in which kids walked around humming tunes by Nerf Herder instead of Weezer. Like Weezer, Nerf Herder possess a sound that is both infectiously simple and deceptively complex. They're the type of band who can sing song after song about girls without getting annoying, because the gawky, grinning cleverness they exude is almost painfully endearing. For the most part, the band sticks to big crunchy power chords, but they're not averse to tossing some new-wave keyboards into "Vivian" or using dinner-on-the-veranda-in-Paris style accordions in "Feeling Bad," a song which also boasts my favorite lyric of the issue: "Paid for a membership down at the local gym/ Tired of getting dumped/Let's get really pumped/ Thought I'd look like Henry Rollins/But I still look like Phil Collins." How can you not like a band so shameless in its self-deprecation? DF

A Newfound Glory "From the Screen to Your Stereo" (Drive-Thru) CD- Wow, this band really is prolific as this is the second ANFG disc we've received this month. I guess when Drive-thru's other bands are Midtown and Allister they have no choice but to release as much Newfound Glory stuff as they possibly can. Okay, here we have 7 covers of movie theme songs. Yup, sounds cool and the final product is pretty cool. But, did we really need the song from Karate Kid Part 2 or that Bryan Adams song "(Everything I do) I do it for you" set to distortion-fueled palm-muted guitars? I think not. The sad part is that their version of "That Thing You Do" from the movie of the same name was actually better in its original version. I guess all I'm trying to say is that A Newfound Glory, a pretty good band in their own right, managed to take 7 songs that all sounded completely different- and often good in their cheesiness- and made them sound exactly alike. Plus, the Celine Dion song from *Titanic* really pushes my patience. RS

A Newfound Glory- Nothing Gold Can Stay (Drive-Thru) CD- I must admit this is a great record. For those of you who haven't heard NFG they have ex-members of Shai Hulud but sound nothing like them at all. They play poppy punk in the vein of Gameface. What sets these guys apart is that the songs are so catchy that they stay in your head forever. Yeah, the lyrics are super cheesy but I think it fits the music and vocal style so well that I wouldn't want it any other way. But what Drive-Thru Records review would be complete without my complaints? First off, this CD was actually released a really long time ago on Eulogy records out of Florida. Drive-Thru bought the record from them and decided to re-release it (whoa, how DIY!) Anyways, they scrapped the original layout, which was actually really cool, and replaced it with slick, glossy photos of NFG playing in front of thousands of kids at Warped Tour. This is extremely misleading and makes it seem like every NFG show is at an arena, which obviously isn't true. Also in the press sheet for this it says NFG "outdrew the main stage headliner" on the Warped Tour. Let's be realistic here, I like NFG but there is no chance that they could outdraw a band like NOFX or Blink 182. Plus, they recently started playing a single of this CD on our local modern rock radio station in regular rotation and I'm not sure how cool that makes this band. JB

One Fine Day (Green/Genet) CD- Oh boy, more metal hardcore to review and I can hardly wait! Hey, I thought that the metal hardcore thing was out of style and emo rock was the new hip genre, right? Well let's give these guys a break since they're from Belgium and maybe they're a little behind the times (don't they worship David Hasselhoff over there?) Actually in comparison to David Hasselhoff One Fine Day is pretty damn good. Once again, we're not breaking any new ground here but these guys are at least solid. The vocals and music remind me a lot of Left For Dead but once in a while these guys bust out a melodic or even slightly jazzy part. One thing that bugs me about this album is that the mix is so bad you can hardly hear the drums at all, in fact the whole production aspect is pretty shoddy. I think these guys sound best when they are doing the more experimental type stuff as opposed to the straight up metalcore. If they continue to experiment they could develop into something unique but I'll pass on this for now. JB

One Man Army "Last Word Spoken" (Adeline) CD- Well, I still have a copy of this act's first album, which was supposedly well-received. But I just might be on the wrong side of the country for that. These guys are definitely doing well for themselves, and certainly fall into the new breed of US streetpunk. (I never thought I'd use a term like that!) Along with bands like the Dropkick Murphys, OMA play very rockin' classic punk that reminds me of Generation X, Stiff Little Fingers or 999. Or, they could even coin a term like the European outfit, Vanilla Muffins, and call it "Sugar Oi!" Either way, it's all too melodic and poppy for most tough US skinheads to dig, but this is real punk that's too sturdy for all the pop-punk and mediocre kids. To me, this sounds like Oi pressed thru the Green Day filter, but I like my Oi a little more meaty. Then again, there was plenty of UK pop-Oi in the 80's (such as

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The Crack) and it can't be a bad thing to try and expand the canon of such a narrow style. Draw your own conclusions. dup

The Parasites "Compost" (Go Kart) CD-

Both one of the most prolific and one of the most underappreciated Berkeley pop-punk bands, the Parasites have been toiling in relative obscurity for the past eight years, and though in that time they've churned out innumerable albums and singles and have crisscrossed the globe more times than the similarly-named Love Bug virus, their infectious (ha-ha) sound has gone largely unnoticed. I'm not quite sure why this is. Firstly, the band has been plagued by internal troubles, not the least of which was a jaguar attack (no kidding) which rendered their guitarist unable to play for six months. I'm sure the constant lineups changes haven't helped, either. So the question is this: will this "sampler" record of Parasites songs recorded over the course of the band's history win them new fans? The answer, sadly, is probably no... while they certainly have their moments in the sunlight, the Parasites still feel kind of second-rate, pop-punk minus most of the pop and most of the punk. The best song here is "She's From Salinas," which wasn't even originally written by the band. The Parasites' new stuff is promising - I really liked their latest album of new material, "Rat Ass Pie," but their musical history is nothing special. DF

Past Mistakes "Try To Blink" (Seasonal Affect) CDep- Punk from Tennessee, with those plainly-spoken/sung pop-punk style vocals. Strong guitar work holds this together much better than the singing. Speedy stuff, with a shade of hardcore in the writing. Not bad for a very pop-oriented formula, but not very much to write home about. They do sound like they're having a good time. dup

Physics "2.7.98" (Gold Standard Laboratories) CDep- I am curious as to where all this instrumental indie rock is coming from today. It must be a reaction to something, but what? Ike Turner? Anyway, this is another instrumental disc that is subtle but not subtle enough to say, read during it. The whole CD seems to be about slow progressions, much like recent Sonic Youth discs, whom this band shares a slight kinship. This is not noisy, though, it just has its moments of dissonance amongst the intricate melodies. I also like the fact that this is live, you can really tell there are some crazy interactions happening between the players. So if you want to read with background music on, buy some Yanni (blech). If you want something that will keep your attention and let you get your indie rock groove on, this is the place. JM

The Pissants "Nothing Looks better Every-day" (Sour) CD- There is something refreshing about reviewing an album put out by a bunch of punk kids, not a bunch of corporate stiffs. From the first note of this album you can see that these kids are sincere and aren't doing this for the money which means a lot (to me at least). Musically this is fast punk rock sort of like Anti-Flag, The Pist or Rancid. This doesn't strike me as anything amazing but it's just as good as most punk bands you would see on the Warped tour or whatever. The backup vocals really add to this band's sound and their drummer sounds like he's on speed or something because he's all over the place. These kids look really

young and I'm sure if they stay together in a few years they could develop into a something really cool. Sure, this isn't the greatest punk record I've ever heard but I feel a lot better giving my money to these kids than many other bands and labels. JB

The Plan "This Time is Not This Place" (Matlock) CD- In listening to this album, I can't help but wonder if The Plan is disappointed in it. It really seems like they want to have a dichotomy that they are just not getting, that they are striving in vain for a 400 Years style "attractive melody vs. rhythmic rock" sound. A lot of what The Plan does comes across very successfully in this album; dual screaming vocals, bass and drum breakdowns, and very rhythmic-based chord progressions. But the album needs to rock, and it just doesn't rock. There are a couple of really good tracks in the middle of the album, some redeeming mathy parts, and a bonus trumpet solo. Admittedly, this record certainly has the potential to grow on you after a couple of listens in a row, after your head has had time to compensate for the lack of "oomph" present, but if you were to listen to it after listening to Converge, you would think that these guys were kind of wimpy. If The Plan is in your town, check them out live because their songs are great, and, for the band's benefit, we'll blame the mediocrity of this album on the recording quality. AP

Plan A Project "Spirit Of A Soldier" (Go Kart) CD- Pretty good working-class punk that relies on heavy backup vox, some great guitar work, strong bass lines and an almost hardcore cadence. They almost sound like they learned a lot from Operation Ivy, which is a little odd for a NJ band. A little sloppier than I like my street punk, this is still well done, and will deliver for any fans of the new breed of anthem-punk acts like The Dropkick Murphys. dup

Planes Mistaken for Stars "fucking fight" (Dim Mak) 7"- When I saw the title of this band I thought "Uhh...another whiny emo band." Well I couldn't be any more wrong (as usual). Planes Mistaken for Stars plays melodic rock/metal with screamed vocals. Some parts remind of Grade in their heyday when they were still a metal band, and I think that the screamed vocals work really well in contrast to the mid-tempo rock n' roll. The song on the A side is pretty good but it's the track on the B side, "The Part You Left Out" that really steals the show. This song has literally not left my turntable in days. My one complaint is that this seven-inch only has two songs and they're both really short. Even though I've never heard it, I'm sure their full length on Deep Elm is great! JB

Ply "Somewhere Beyond Farewell" (Burnt Toast) CD- Do me a favor: think back to a homeroom in high school. Anyone, I don't care. You had the jocks, you had the bruisers, you had the nerds, you had the yearbook staff, you had tons of stereotypical kids that really only exist in hindsight (at the time, they were just kids who were pushed into a corner). There was always that one kid, though, that super quiet kid that you never noticed. Once in a while, the kid would take a chance and spout off some answer in such a way as to floor the rest of the class. Then back to the seclusion and the kid is forgotten; that is, until that comment hits you a few periods later and you think about it the rest of the day. This is that kid's soundtrack. This is

The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS Dan Frantic: DF
du prospicio: dup Jonah Bayer: JB

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nothing more than jangly indie rock with a little emo for the kids, but something about the melodies and the lyrics hit me about five reviews later. I was so affected that I threw the CD back, rewrote the review, and tried to figure out what resonated so clearly with me. I couldn't find it, and won't any time soon. The songs are still sticking with me, though. JM

Pocket Change "Golden" (Resurrection A.D.) CD- When I first saw this CD, I was sure I was going to be listening to some bad pop punk. And while this is indeed pop punk, it is by no means bad. I get the impression that this band is as much influenced by British pop punk (especially the vocals) as they are by the emo-punk crowd. How can I say anything bad about a band that is playing sincere music that is fun and loud? My favorite punk record of this issue. JM

Poison the Well "The Opposite of Decem-ber..." (Trustkill) CD- Up until this issue I don't think I had ever given a good review to the records Trustkill sent us, and hey whadya know, two stunning records in one issue. Oh yeah, I almost forgot to write the second. Here it is: Poison the Well, from Florida, are a great hardcore band. Tight, creative, and pummeling: Musically they sound like a more straight-forward version of Shai Hulud, but the vocals are a bit more scream than their Florida counterparts. The thing I like the best about this disc is their ability to throw in melody and even, gasp, harmony, without slowing the pace or getting sappy. I really recommend this disc for everyone bored of the Victory stuff (not to mention the last few Trustkill releases.) Plus, Jake Bannon's artwork is phenomenal. RS

Pollen "Chip" (Fueled by Ramen) CD- Pollen is another symptom of the death of something, another symptom of people having forgotten that punk rock arose because kids were sick of the radio. They are another example of a band that lacks musical interest and originality, and another example of a band that thinks guitar solos are cool again. A return to straight-up rock, as forwarded by bands like Hot Water and Rye Coalition, can be exciting and welcome, but the retrogression of emo and punk into a bunch of happy pop-punk bands is BORING. There's a difference between simplicity and complete lack of integrity. Pollen is a pop-punk band with music that is upbeat and happy, and lyrics that are silly and "fun". This album does nothing to help the oppressed working class. If you like Tuesday, you might like this, but you may as well just keep listening to Tuesday. AP

Q and not U "Hot and informed" (Dischord/Desoto) 7"- The first thing I noticed about this record is that this band has some pretty big names working for them, for being relatively obscure (I had never heard of them before this release). I mean this album was recorded by Ian Mackaye at Inner Ear and the graphics were done by Jawbox legend J. Robbins. So what's the big deal, Jonah? Are these guys any good, or do you Ian and J. just have too much free time? Of course Ian and J. don't have too much free time, they're two of the busiest personalities in indie rock, what are you thinking? And oh yeah,

the Q and not U definitely rock. Musically these guys kind of remind me of a less hectic At the Drive in mixed with some of the mellower Fugazi material. They do a lot of really cool off time stuff, and create a lot of cool sounds using feedback and stops and starts. However just when you think you've heard enough odd time signatures

and feedback, they break into a haunting melody that just leaves you wanting more than three songs. Unfortunately for you (and me) this seven inch only has three, but don't despair, I'm sure this is not the last we've heard from Q and not U. JB

The Queers "Return to the Village of the Assfuckers" (Hopeless) CD- What the hell is the point of me even reviewing this record? Everyone knows what the Queers sound like, I mean their last 15 records all sounded the same. In case you live under a rock this is straight-forward punk pop from the guys who helped originate it. And while I can appreciate their influence, these guys are simply too old to be doing this shit. You can just tell how bitter and jaded these guys are from their lyrics, which I think attempt to be funny but do a better job of making me embarrassed for them that they write this crap. Should I stop with their brilliant anti-vegan anthem of "Stupid Fucking Vegan" which really demonstrates the negative aspects of veganism in an intelligent and well thought out manner. The most convincing part of the song is the informative chorus of "You're a stupid fucking, stupid fucking, stupid fucking, stupid fucking vegan." It might be fun for these old timers to sit around and pick on kids half their age but the real joke is this band. If you're seven years old or you have the mentality of a seven year old (like the members of this band) you'll like this record. Unfortunately for the Queers I'm hoping that the average Law of Inertia reader has some brain cells left and skip this one...it's really that bad. JB

Quix*otic "Night for Day" (Ixor Stix) CD- What the hell is this? I've never been into art rock. Okay call me simple-minded, but I think I'm too dumb/unimaginative for it. I always felt as if I should be watching some performance piece when I listen to art-rock. I mean, I can barely stand even the most rocking parts of Sonic Youth! And what's with the asterisks in the band name? I appreciated-- but wasn't in love with-- the sounds of Slant 6 and Autoclave, two bands of which Quix*otic contains members. So, yes this band is artrock as only Olympia or Washington DC can churn out, and no I'm not into it. I could see how some hardcore fans of the more lo-fi, raw aspects of Sonic Youth might find this appealing, but c'mon, any zine that has ever had Elliott grace their cover probably will hate this. LOI happens to be one of those zines. RS

Rabies Caste "For The Vomiting Tractor Driver" (Infernal Racket) CD- Ridiculously heavy, dark sludge by this Russian-Israeli(?) act. Lots of low end basslines and thrashing, weird discordant music. Up, down, back and forth, it's like the entire Earache label roster trying to tune their instruments on a ship in a very bad storm. They occasionally pick it up and deliver some steady drum patterns, only to tear it back down in a throbbing manner not totally different that bands like Barkmarket and Unsane. If you like it desperate and brutal, these cats from Jerusalem will take you there. dup

Radar Mercury "Thank You Goodnight" (Doghouse) CD- My first experience with Radar Mercury was when I booked a show for them and Discount this Halloween. At the time I hadn't heard of them, and only knew that they were ex-members of Endeavor. I was a little weirded out when their singer said he had

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missed my own band's set because he was outside doing "vocal exercises" or something. But as soon as they hit the stage they blew me away with their no frills brand of emotional rock. They're an indie band, but have the energy of a hardcore band which is a rare combination, and did I mention that they rocked? Needless to say I was really excited to hear this EP on Doghouse, and it does not disappoint. The recording is excellent and all of the energy they have during their live show comes through on this four song CD. The layout isn't really up to the typical Doghouse standards, but what can you do? Unfortunately when I tried to book them again I was informed that their singer (who, like Jay from Kid Dynamite, was also an ex-member of Bound) left the band and I am not sure what their situation is right now. Regardless I would recommend picking up this CD to anyone who likes to sit in their room and rock out with an air guitar. JB

Radio 4 "The New Song And Dance" (Gern Blansten) CD- I know I'd heard something good about this act somewhere. Superb, tense power pop that sounds perfectly at home on the label that was home to the never-celebrated-enough Chisel. I hear a bit of Elvis Costello and Joe Jackson here, a lot of Clash's sense of melody and even a bit of repetitive art-rock in the arrangements not unlike Gang Of Four. Good backup vocals keep this strung together, but this isn't your typical punchy power pop. Eschewing punk roots, Radio 4 work in the midtempo field, creating very memorable angular rock songs that remind me of Naked Raygun's mellower moments for some reason. Excellent gritty textured smart pop from these ex-members of NYC-area acts Garden Variety and Milhouse. dup

Radon (No Idea) CD- When I fist saw this I thought it was going to be totally metal. The title Radon, people screaming on the cover, I thought I had this one nailed. I was as shocked as you were when I put this in and heard good old fashioned rock n' roll. These guys are actually pretty good and play punk rock in a very gritty and raw style while still retaining melody and hooks. I'm having problems thinking of who to compare these guys too but the best I could say is early Samiam. This album has really been growing on me lately and the more I listen to it, it seems the more I like it. In fact I had to rewrite this review because I left it in my CD changer and like this more and more every time it comes on. Bonus points for the list of alternate CD titles, my favorite being "Woman I Just Gave You Sweet Lovin' Five Minutes Ago." I wouldn't rush out and buy this but if I saw it in the used CD bin (and I didn't already have a copy) I would pick this up. What does this have to do with you? It means I think you should buy it too. JB

Reaching Forward "For The Cause" (Reflections) CD- Dutch pos-youth straightedge 'core with a really throaty singer (Johnny Forward), some solid midtempo busts and a good bass presence. Every time one of these Euro outfits comes along playing letter-perfect NYC Youth Crew hardcore, I forget that the style has all been done before. Reaching Forward matches the classic late 80's intensity of Judge or Chain Of Strength and adds a more realistic (for the genre anyway) view of the world. A bit more interesting than the Crucial Response stuff, this

is plenty fast but with those all-important breaks and some dark intros. I especially like how they write things like "Mosh It" on their guitars and "Fuck Disco Fuck Fashion" in the insert. Fun stuff that makes me happy to hear people still play that way. Oh, and the picture of the band in sweatshirts, baseball jackets and sneakers is pretty mint. dup

Red Roses for a Blue Lady "The Return to Melancholy" (Eulogy) CD- I first heard of these guys when I saw they were on the lineup for this year's Helfest. So what does this elusive band with a really strange name sound like? Well let's put it this way, Red Roses is definitely metal and it definitely rocks. These guys remind me of a less technical Shai Hulud or Harvest with a little throatier vocals. These guys mix it up between heavy and soft parts a lot and it really helps this record from being monotone like so many other metal records. I've got to hand it to these guys: they can switch from chaotic metal to melodic breakdowns and make it sound normal, which is no easy task. And oh yeah, kids don't worry these guys have their share of breakdowns so you can take out your frustrations in the pit. I also can't forget the layout which has lots of naked people and blood. On second thought just pick this up and you can see it for yourself. I'm impressed. JB

Reflector "Where Has All the Melody Gone" (Status) CD- Three years ago I probably couldn't have named a single band from Kansas other than the Getup Kids, and suddenly now I can name three offhand: the Casket Lottery, the Anniversary, and Reflector. It's funny how, to outside eyes, scenes like this seem to spring up from out of nowhere, while in fact I'm sure they've slowly grown and incubated over time. It makes me wonder: how many other undiscovered music scenes are there hidden throughout America? Once all the post-rockers have sucked Chicago dry and the pop bands have left Athens, Georgia for greener pastures, what cities will step up to take their place? It just goes to show you that there's good music everywhere. Now, if I were President of Kansas, I'm not sure if I'd choose Reflector to be my emissaries to the outside world - they lack a bit of the musical punch of the Casket Lottery, and don't have the synthesized moog sounds of the Anniversary. They rock, but in a tight, economical three-piece-band sort of way. "Where Has All the Melody Gone" continues in the same vein as Reflector's debut EP "Journal," meaning it's got that Midwestern emo-rock sound in a big way. DF

Reggie and the Full Effect "Promotional Copy" (Vagrant) CD- This album, slightly more experimental than the last, is comprised of unreleased material, discovered after the untimely death of Reggie. If you liked Reggie and the Full Effect before, you will still like them, provided you did not grow weary of their pop antics. If you have never heard them before, ask yourself the following questions: a) Do I like the Get Up Kids? b) Would I like them more if they were more stupid and weird? If the answer to these questions is yes, buy the first Reggie album. If, after listening to the first album, you feel that it lacks the desirable amount of hip-hop and techno parts, pick this up. The last track is brilliant. AP

Rocket From the Crypt "All Systems Go 2" (Swami) CD- If you haven't heard of Rocket

From the Crypt, then you've been living in some kind of parallel universe for the last decade, but let me give you an easy explanation. You know those people you see at shows with a rocket ship tattooed on their arm, or maybe you've seen this elusive design on belt buckles or rings. There is a reason that fans for this band are so adamant, Rocket simply plays Rock n Roll the way it was meant to be played: loud, sloppy, and full of attitude. Since this band releases so many singles, this CD is the second in a collection of vinyl only and rare tracks now available on CD. There are some real gems on this CD and it is great that everyone can now enjoy them. My only complaint is that some of these songs are too out there for me and I can't get into them (Is it me, or does track three sound like White Zombie?) However, this CD is intended for die-hard fans and I'm sure they will love every chord this rock n roll machine spits out. If you're a die hard fan you'll probably already own this and if you're not I would probably recommend getting an earlier studio release but you may also enjoy this as well. Awesome. JB

Sarge "Distant" (Mud) CD- In the past 7 or 8 years of my life I have encountered numerous musical outcasts residing in the underground who deserved the fruits of major label stardom way more than any of the bands currently in the upper echelons of mainstream crap. Sarge was always one of those bands. I truly feel that Elizabeth Elmore, the bands singer and lead guitarist, is one of the best song-writers in America right now. Her sexy-as-hell cooing into the microphone is enough to make even the most blockhead of tough guys swoon. The lush melodies she writes have subtle hints of aggression and power, while remaining starkly beautiful and passionate. Unfortunately for us, this is Sarge's final release, and while I could have done without the live songs, the 5 originals and 3 covers are more than enough to satisfy me. I don't know if I'd rush to the store for this instead of, say, their last album, "The Glass In Tact," but if you're new to Sarge this is a very good place to start. RS

The Scaries "Wishing One Last Time" (Route 14) CD- Oh my, what have we here? Super fast punk in the vein of Superchunk from Chapel Hill. Who would have ever thought? The Scaries are one hell of a band, combining superb guitar work with breakneck drum beats, yet still keeping the harmony and head-bobbing choruses in full. I would even go as far to say that this is the best punk band I have never heard of, and if some label is very keen they may snatch away these 4 young upstarts and bring them to a mass audience. Great great great stuff. Look hard for this. (PO Box 501 Langhorne, PA 19047) RS

Screeching Weasel "Thank You Very Little" (Panic Button) 2XCD- Screeching Weasel is a goddamn prolific band, and over the course of their 14-year career they've released so many tunes in so many formats that the fairly extensive CD full of b-sides and outtakes that they released in 1995, "Kill the Musicians," wasn't enough to document all the miscellaneous songs that this influential Chicago-based snot-punk band has churned out in its time. However, while "Kill the Musicians" was a must for any Screeching Weasel fan, and in fact contained a fair amount of excellent songs that were on par with or even better than much of the band's studio output, "Thank You Very Little," Screeching Weasel's second outtakes CD is really starting to scrape the bottom of the barrel. Sure, there are some cool songs, like "27 Things I Wanna Do To You" or

a reworking of the Queers' seminal "Fuck the World" entitled "Amy Saw Me Looking at Her Boobs." But most of the other songs are either barely-different reworkings of previously-released Screeching Weasel songs, like the version of "Cindy's on Methadone" that replaces the word "Cindy" with "Shirley," or an inferior version of "I Need Therapy," which already appeared on "Kill the Musicians." Disc 2, which consists of a live show from 1993, has the recording quality you would have expected from a high school band - that is, it's unlistenable. In many ways Ben Weasel is a musical genius, and his contribution to the annals of punk rock is undeniable, but I would caution him against lending a stamp of approval to every single Screeching Weasel release that comes down the line. Some songs are left unreleased for a reason. DF

Second Coming "In Denial of Our Impermanence" (Breakout) CD- I'm pretty sure this is the first release from one of the oldest Bay Area hardcore bands in existence. As a matter of fact Second Coming has been around so long that I am inclined to believe their guitarist, Don, who told me that they once opened for Operation Ivy. How's that for cred? Nevertheless, Second Coming sounds nothing like most music found in the Bay Area, much less Bay Area hardcore - what little there may be of that. Instead, they sound a lot like older Earth Crisis or Strife at their most intense. Hard-hitting beats, dropped-D guitar chaos, and shout-out choruses galore makes this CD a little too on the beaten track for my taste, but nonetheless a worthy effort for their first LP. I imagine Victory will come a knockin' quite shortly, although this type of hardcore probably saw its heyday 5 years ago. RS

Seven Storey Mountain "Based on a True Story" (Deep Elm) CD- After this band's last disc on Art Monk well over 3 years ago I was hooked. They had a melodic approach to hardcore that wasn't too hard or too soft. Plus, their ability to play relatively simple chord progressions yet make them still sound interesting for over 3 minutes was a definite plus. Emo without the sappiness or boredom. This was rock. Needless to say I was really psyched when I found out this band was back together and had a new disc out, and let me tell you, it does not disappoint at all. Definitely rocking out in an aggressive way yet still maintaining a sense of beauty and grace. Plus, the fifth track, "Politician" is perhaps far and away the best tune about political greed I've ever heard (they should strap Al Gore down in a chair and make him listen to the thing over and over and over...) This is my favorite Deep Elm release yet. Get this. RS

Shadows Fall "Of One Blood" (Century Media) CD- Wacky guitar solos, cheesy growls, and technically proficient but ultimately lame songs are what lie in store for those that purchase this album. Not only that, but the band seems to take them seriously, which is just sad. What else do I have to do to convince you that this is a pile of dreck? This will appeal to the kids that look you dead in the eye and tell you that Man-O-War reinvented metal. Me, I couldn't wait until the CD was over, though the band owes me 46 minutes of my life that I wasted. Ugh. JM

Shai Hulud/Another Victim "A Whole New Level of Sickness" (Trustkill) CD- Hell fuck-

Track Attack

The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS
du prospicio: dup

Dan Frantic: DF
Jonah Bayer: JB

Jason Murphy: JM
Adam Parks: AP

ing yeah, Shai Hulud is back with three tunes that I've been waiting over a year to hear. On this split this terribly underrated hardcore band— that combines melody with relentless screaming— belts out one original and covers of "Anesthesia" by Bad Religion and "Linoleum" by NOFX. I must admit, the band butchers what is one of the best songs ever recorded in "Linoleum," but I don't care... it's so much fun anyway. This is, I think, their last recording with singer Chad who left the band to play guitar for A New Found Glory (oh Chad, what have you done?) so I'll cherish this thing. This is a great CD. Oh yeah, Another Victim suck in that Hatebreed/Earth Crisis type way. RS

Shelter "When 20 Summers Pass" (Victory) CD- I'm not quite sure why Victory would release this record as opposed to the Revelation Records Porcelli and Ray practically built from the ground up. Nonetheless,

I have to admit I'm not that familiar with much of what Shelter has been up to the past few years as I shrugged my shoulders and passed on their last two releases on Rev and Roadrunner. Maybe it was the new pop-punk sound (and occasional experiments with techno and ska that I heard about) that turned me off to the formerly great hardcore institution that is Ray Cappo and John Porcelli. With much wariness mixed with a hearty helping of anticipation I went into this release and what I found was some strong punk rock in the vein of a less energetic, much more melodic Shelter that I used to know. Thoughtful lyrics about being on the road, violence in hardcore, and, of course, Krishna, combined with some rather sparse instrumentation has me pleased. Let's be honest, if these admittedly good songs were released by a less legendary band they would surely fly under the radar— if noticed at all— but the toned down, sometimes minimalistic punk rock here isn't half bad. RS

Shiner "Starless" (O&O) CD- Ah, finally another Shiner record. I was starting to wonder about the fate of this criminally underrated Kansas City quartet. Musically, I always thought Shiner was doing a very similar thing to Jawbox, with those amazing time-signatures and guitar tones. But, for some reason Shiner have never been as embraced as their DC counterparts, which is weird 'cause they're every bit as textured and powerful. It's also weird 'cause their last album, "Lula Divinia" was on Desoto Records, a label owned by former members of Jawbox. On this CD we have the amazing recording qualities I've come to expect from Shiner. It's very dreamy while still maintaining more power than most metal bands can muster, not unlike Hum. Another thing that stands out is Shiner's incredible rhythm section which provides a rock solid base for the relentless power-chord attack of the guitars. All in all, I'm very happy with what we have here and I see a definite progression from their last record, which, while a very very solid record, got a bit tedious after the first few songs. Unfortunately this CD might fly under the radar of the indie rock masses who should be gobbling this stuff up with open arms, but I think it's wonderful stuff. RS

Shockwave "Dominicon" (Good Life) CD- I hate to admit it, but I really like this stuff. Shockwave plays chugga-chugga metal hard-

core with multiple vocalists, a la Path Of Resistance. Actually they not only sound a lot like Path but also look like them, complete with hooded sweatshirts and gas masks (I hope this is a joke). Anyways, they are from Erie, PA and I believe they have members of Disciple and other Erie metal bands so you know what to expect. Metal Hardcore in the vein of Disciple or Brothers Keeper. If you couldn't tell from the band name these guys are also obsessed with Transformers who are all over the album— including the artwork. Hmm, you tell me: is too much Transformers a bad thing? There is also a song off their demo at the end of the CD, and while the recording isn't as good I actually liked the songs on their 4 song demo a little bit more. Regardless this is a pretty good record and highly recommended for fans of Path of Resistance or Victory Records-era where they actually put out good records (Grade and Boy Sets Fire excluded, of course). JB

Shutdown "Something to Prove" (Victory) CD- So it seems like this band has found a heavier sound since their last release. Unfortunately, they have not returned their singer to where they found him, meaning the high pitched singing is another obstacle between me and liking this band. Not only that, but the combination also warrants comparisons to Brother's Keeper, who we all know I really cannot tolerate. In all fairness, these guys are not that bad; they have some decent breakdowns and the intro was interesting. It's just that this sounds a lot like other stuff, and in a genre not exactly known for its originality, specifically hardcore, that's not a good thing. Why get this when there are other bands doing it better, right? Major points off, though, for selling their t-shirts and hats in the insert; what is this, "Wu-Tang Forever"? JM

The Shutdowns "T-75" (Theologian) CD- Good guitar punk rock from the west coast, featuring Mo' Grease from The Grabbers & Manic Hispanic (what happened to THEIR second album?). Catchy without being bubblegum pop punk, this is solid speedy stuff with some nice backups and the aforementioned guitar WAAAY up in the front. Total LA style stuff, these guys were totally raised on all the left coast classics, and Steve Soto even sings backups. dup

Shut the Fuck Up! (Alberti) 7"- I know what you're thinking, "Jonah, what a horrible band name." You're right, but at least the horrible name fits the horrible music on this slab of vinyl. STFU plays grindcore in the same way that makes me hate most of the acts in this genre. Fast, unimaginative and boring. Every song sounds the same, there is no melody and these guys don't seem to have any talent at all. I think the problem lies in this style of music where it is just too easy to write something like this and record it without putting any thought or effort into it. I could not torture myself by listening to the second side of this. The music sucks, the name sucks, even the layout sucks. Don't buy this, in fact don't even look at it. I now feel dumber for having listened to this, it's that bad. JB

Shuttlecock "This Is the Hour Of Lead" (Iron Compass) CD- Dark and formal packaging surrounds this, a stop and start art-rock thing (tracks 1-3 are a 'suite' in 3 parts). With the DC-inspired arrangements and the spitting of long words, it sort of reminds me of Circus Lupus.

Chugging guitars in a tense, lurching staccato with a very foreboding singer who likes to sing from the throat. Very mathy, and I never was too crazy about math in general. If extremely serious art-rock is your thing, this should set you straight. dup

Sicko "A Brief History Of..." (Mutant Pop) CD- If you're someone who was around during the "Youth Crew" days of late 80's NYC hardcore (or you know someone who was), chances are there's some resentment for that scene that became over saturated and all-too homogeneous. Regardless of how good they were, lots of people got sick of Youth Of Today and the scene that followed them pretty quickly. That's kind of how I feel about pop punk nowadays. If you've read over ten of my reviews, you probably know that already. Thankfully I happen upon a few exceptions to this pop-punk induced fatigue. Sicko managed to slap together an interesting mix of intense yet light-hearted music with memorable lyrics and generally tight playing. Their songs have the rare ability to really connect to the point, in part due to comfortably earnest singing and poignant song topics. This record collects demos, scraps and recording sessions from the late Washington act along with the live recording of their last show. Needless to say, their scraps are better than most bands' singles, and covers of REM's "These Days" and Van Halen's "Panama" are clearly done with love and not the usual "ain't-we-witty" sentiment. If you never heard them before, this probably isn't the best place to start ("You Can Feel The Love In This Room" or "You Are Not The Boss Of Me") but this is nonetheless a document of a great band, and one that should be remembered when the pop punk phenomenon is a distant memory. dup

Silent Majority "You Would Love to Know" (Initial) CD- When I found out that Silent Majority was all set to release their first EP in damn near 4 years I was more than psyched. One of my favorite hardcore bands ever, and arguably the hardcore band with the best sense of melody playing in the Northeast right now, it is a good day when any zine gets an SM release in their mailbox. Unfortunately Initial slacked and I didn't get my copy for a long time. I almost ordered a copy online— something I rarely do nowadays when most any CD I want gets sent to me for free— simply to avoid the wait for this EP. So, here it is and it is better than I ever expected. I must admit, I wasn't too into it when I first popped it in my discman a few days ago, but then again I don't think I've loved any of their releases right off the bat. And, in tune with their prior few releases, this is a five song masterpiece. Could it be that this great Long Island hardcore band has gotten, gasp, more focused? Or, gasp, a bit heavier? Don't get me wrong, these songs still have the amazing melodic guitar work that would strip the bark off a tree as soon as it would get the crown climbing over each other to sing into the microphone. But, Tommy's vocals seem a bit angrier and more concentrated. Fortunately I really like what I hear, and I guarantee this will be my driving CD of choice for the summer of Y2K. Buy this or you're not my friend anymore. RS

Skitzo "Got Sick" (GWAR) CD- Inexplicably bad metal GWAR rip-off with some of the absolute illest cover artwork I've ever encountered, which is actually saying something. Apparently, this group is all about vomiting (as the action photos prove) which is probably the best conclusion in itself about what they do. But the comedy with stuff like this is all in the packaging. The band picture

is the funniest thing since Venom's stage show, and they list the "ingredients" as "hate, MSG, Insanity, Beaver Blood, Metal." That cover art can be summed up as porn flick plus vomit action divided by photoshop. Song titles include, "Dahmer's Daycare", "Monster Stomp Intro" and "Decapitated Head Parade." Imagine if Butt Trumpet started playing hair metal, mix in a bunch of samples and some very amazingly heavy-handed skits. There you have it. Thank god California still has bands like this— it actually starts to grow on you. This band is also online at members.aol.com/Skitzo70. (They've been around for almost 20 years and a member of Faith No More plays on this record!) Get to work kids. dup

Sloppy Seconds "Garage Days Regurgitated" (Nitro) CD- Oh my God, you've got to be joking me. How does Nitro stay in business putting out crap like 30 Foot Fall and Sloppy Seconds? So basically this is 7 cover songs of bands like The Runaways, The Fools, Holly and the Italians, and a few other people you've probably never heard of (as if you'd actually heard of a band called Holly and the Italians.) The really sad part is that I bet there are a bunch of kids out there in Southern California or something that actually like shit like Apocalypse Hoboken, The Dwarves, Furious George, and this. I never have and I think it's pretty safe to say I never will. Oh yeah, I would say props for covering "TV Party" by Black Flag, but then again the original was much better (even though the Sloppy Seconds version is basically the exact same thing.) RS

Slow Fore "Oil" (Espresso) CD- These guys do that Jejune dynamic "We're playing quiet, now loud, now quiet again" thing. They do it much more aggressively though. The clean parts are nice and pretty, and the rockin' parts are actually quite rockin'. They also do that Jejune "We're a guy and a girl singing" thing, but not as well. Overall, a pretty good CD. The vocals are slightly sub-par, but they're raw and adequately recorded, refreshingly not too poppy. Did I mention they sound like Jejune? AP

The Smugglers "Rosie" (Lookout!) CD- As circumstance has it, the Smugglers hail from Vancouver, but these Canadian pop-punk heart-throbs might as well be from Berkeley, considering the tremendous affinity they have with East Bay stalwarts like the Hi-Fives. But as Berkeley's talent pool begins to dry up (until the next batch of innovative musicians begins to show up, and as far as I'm concerned it can't happen too soon) Vancouver is arguably taking its place as the new global epicenter of pop-punk, with the Smugglers at the helm of the movement. There's an undeniable danceyness to the Smugglers' tunes, which update Buddy Holly so efficiently that it reminds me why I liked this type of music in the first place. Are the Smugglers breaking new artistic ground with "Rosie"? With the exception of a couple nifty studio tricks, no. Is this their best album? Again no, that honor would probably go to "Selling the Sizzle." But the Smugglers still convey their Northern brand innocent rock'n'roll charm so well that it's hard not to crack a smile at this, even if I can't escape the nagging feeling that I've heard it a million times before. DF

Snuff "Numb Nuts" (Fat Wreck) CD- Yeeouch, that cover hurts. A band this accomplished seems to have regressed in artwork. The ALBUM, however, is still Snuff. Prime

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pop-punk with the grown-up sensibility that is their trademark, or the trademark of Snuff and all the British acts who copy them. Speedy, energetic with accents of organ and the occasional horns. Definitely good, though I don't know if it's their best. Fans will not be disappointed. dup

Someday I "Look Up And Live" (Owned and Operated) CD- Thank god for the Blasting Room and O&O. Without them, there'd be no chance for the legacy of genius that is The Descendants/All to live on and help out other bands. Someday I play a very catchy mix of rock and emo songwriting. The songs are very textured and soaring, almost too much, in a way that makes me recall the dynamics of Hum. But the end result is short of being too choppy, but rather a pretty satisfying coarse post-hardcore sound that is pretty original. It has a clean pop feel to it (the vocals especially), perhaps the aural connection to All. But overall, this is good stuff, a lot more to chew on than many new acts. I'm interested in seeing where they take this style. Chalk another one up for the power-pop team. dup

Sonny Vincent "Parallax In Wonderland" (Devil Doll) CD- Ok, have you heard this name before? I know I have somewhere, and once I opened the disc, I immediately knew I had some reading up to do. Sonny sings and plays guitar, and a bunch of different people back him up... including Wayne Kramer (MC5), Captain Sensible (Damned) and Ron and Scott Ashton (Stooges). Sneezing Jesus! Apparently, the man is a lesser-known legend of punk rock, having formed the Testors in 1976, toured the US with The Dead Boys in 1979, made films in the early 1980's, formed a group with Bob Stinson (Replacements), played in Half Japanese, recorded and toured with Mo Tucker (Velvet Underground)....UNBELIEVABLE! The man makes Vincent Gallo seem like a slouch! This new recording drips with the raw guts of pure 1970's NYC punk- furious, loud, soulful, poetic and raging! This man is still hungry, and this record rocks like a mutherfucker! This one record kicks 90% of modern 'garage' bands back into the stone ages. If you have any appreciation for the roots of punk, or the early CBGB punk scene, this is essential. One of the best surprises I've had in a while. dup

Sorry About Dresden "The Mayor Will Abdicate" (Route Fourteen) CD- Certain things outside of just the music can influence a review. For example, let's say someone ran over my foot while I was writing this review, it probably wouldn't be the most glowing piece I have ever written. Or if the band sent me some vegan chocolate chip cookies, I would probably write a better review than if they sent me nothing (hint, hint). This is one of those cases, as the CD I was sent skips horribly. There is nothing more annoying than listening to the CD jump around and having to get up and fast-forward it. Ah well. As for the music, it's fun rock and roll situated squarely in the indie tradition with a little emo twist for y'all (Get Up Kids and Braid comparisons can be heard by this kid). It's fun, rocking, and puts a smile on your face, but not essential. JM

Souls Emancipated Into Eternal Defiance (USA Records) CD- I have to say, there's something really soothing about hearing bands that

sound very very similar to old Bloodlet or Integrity coming from an hour outside my hometown of San Francisco. Not that Bloodlet was ever soothing, but it's kind of this "I hate to admit I like this kind of music" thing. I mean, in a sense it seems like this kind of tough-guy hardcore should be shoved under the rug or disregarded- especially with band names like this one- but I find a sort of sick pleasure in listening to this, as if I'm making up for all the bad punk I listened to when Integrity and Bloodlet were still good. You get the thick-as-a-cement-wall dropped-D guitars, brutal drum beats, and gruff screaming mixed in with some remarkably cool syncopation and breakdowns. I guess if I weren't in such a good mood I would just toss this in with the rest of Victory stuff I need to get rid of, but as much as I hate to admit it... this is pretty good. RS

Spread The Disease "The Sheer Force Of Inertia" (Eulogy) CD- Blazing, jagged up-down arty noise/hardcore with ambient jazz bits strewn about. Reminds me of Converge or CR with a mix of intense blasts of fury, disorienting time changes and weird interjections of melody. Still nice and enjoyable hard in that Infest type of way, with a lot of good metal influence (the Iron Maiden guitar feel is there and I'm a happy lad for it); this still manages to not rest easily in the metal or hardcore categories. File under: hardcore so complex even the indie-rockers will love it. If they pull it off as well live, these guys could easily be called genius. dup

The Starlite Desperation "Go Kill Mice" (Flapping Jet) CD- I'm a late convert to the cult of Starlite Desperation fandom - last summer, when my record store co-workers (who, it should be noted, counted among their ranks a former member of the band) were almost unanimously ranting and raving about the brilliance of this 70's throwback band, I was rolling my eyes in confusion and exasperation. I just didn't get them... But the sophomore album from this Detroit trio has torn the veil from my eyes, and now, ladies and gentlemen, I get it. Unlike similar bands, who draw from the Stooges or the Stones for the sake of pure nostalgia or kitsch, the Starlite Desperation takes the baton from their influences and then runs it the rest of the way to the finish line. Along the way, they tear things up with pounding drumming, and a sexy, soulful groove that can't be faked. This album has definitely torn me a new asshole, and I'm not afraid to say it. DF

Starmarket "Four Hours Light" (Deep Elm) CD- This Starmarket record is a Swedish venture into the musical undertakings of a Jimmy Eat World/Sting hybrid. Looking at that comparison, it seems kind of stupid, but kind of accurate. As much as I am down on the whole pop-shift trend, Starmarket pulls out a lot of stops and has emerged with a record that contains more musical integrity than most indie-pop attempts, and has done it with brilliant production. These songs are dangerously catchy, but are musically more intelligent than most songs that don't make middle school girls cringe. A downside is somewhat banal lyrics and an even more banal rhyme-scheme (a lot of know/go, you/you, start/heart lines). But though some of the lyrics are stupid, others are redeeming, moving into poetic moments, and the vocals make them even more pleasant. Boys should buy this for their girlfriends. Girls should buy it for their boyfriends. Lonely people should buy

it for themselves. AP

Steven Brodsky "Expose Your Overdubs" (Magic Bullet) CD- Steve has compiled music that he recorded on his personal four-track between 1996 and 1999 and put it on a compact disc for your listening pleasure. A nice effort on his part, but the end product leaves much to be desired. Its pseudo-timeless songs are slightly reminiscent of the hippie laments of the days of yore, but are insultingly half-hearted and generally less satisfying than those tunes. If you liked the "Marlboro Man" song on Cave In's "Creative Eclipses" then you might like Steven's solo work. But if you are increasingly frustrated with the direction that Brodsky's songwriting has taken since early Cave In stuff, then spare yourself the further disappointment. This disc seems an effort similar in ambition to Jeremy Enigk's solo shot, the difference being that Cave In wasn't around for long enough for Brodsky to earn Enigk's kind of credibility. AP

Stigmata "Do Unto Others..." (Victory) CD- A good friend of mine in Ithaca, who happens to be from the Albany, NY scene that produced this band, claims that Stigmata made the upstate NY scene what it is. Without a lot of national recognition or acclaim my friend claims that there would be no Earth Crisis, One King Downs, or Snapcases without Stigmata. He may just be right as I've heard his sentiments repeated elsewhere. Here we have Stigmata's return to the upstate NY hardcore scene after a few-year hiatus, and all I can think of is "Scratch the Surface" era Sick of It All mixed with a bit of upstate flavor a la Another Victim. It's pretty good stuff- nothing to win any awards by- but competent and rocking hardcore nonetheless. But, what really drives spikes through my hands about this record is its seeming call for violence. I may be missing the point of what they're preaching (and the only thing that leads me to surmise that is the overtly Krishna theme of the artwork), but songs like "Life 4 a Life" with the lines "Eye for an eye/this is how we should live/life for life with no reason to forgive/ rapists castrated, murders put to death/ justice system must be torn down..." What fucking assholes! In a scene already riduled by the inevitable violence that comes with testosterone-ridden music, these fuckers think they are the victims- or let me rephrase that: militantly refuse to be the victims. Do not support this band and this kind of idiocy. I am only too sorry that too many people in hardcore feel the same way. RS

The Stratford Mercenaries "Sense Of Soliditude" (Southern) CD- A friend recently tried to tell me that everyone gives respect to Crass, but no one REALLY likes their music. I had to object, as Stations Of The Crass is a considerable favorite of mine and I know plenty of people who do on Feeding of The 5000 or Christ: The Album. So, albeit at a distance, I definitely noticed Steve Ignorant's return to music with Schwartzenegger and this new act. It's probably going to piss off a lot of fans of Conflict, Rudimentary Peni, Crass and the rest of the Crass records roster, but The Stratford Mercenaries might be the best material that Ignorant's ever done. Shockingly mature, well-crafted songs show no loss of the tense *weltenschmerz* on the part of Steve, but instead use electronics, orchestral arrangements, and keyboards to create everything from rollicking punk rants to near-gothic poetry. It's dynamic, challenging, and very heartfelt. This record will make a nice place in a collection next

to Joe Strummer's most recent album- both are punk standbys who haven't lost nor forgotten their roots and still manage to produce material that leaves their past work where it belongs. A recent review of Chumbawumba coined them, "...a bit like Crass for people who don't like punk." I'd say The Stratford Mercenaries are a bit like Chumbawumba for people who still respect what punk is all about- growth. dup

Sunday's Best "Sons of the Second String" (Market Participant) 7"- So all of you loyal Law of Inertia readers know how much Ross despises this band. However this seven inch is so good it might even change my almighty editor's opinion. These guys really blew me away when I saw them at CMJ last year, and while I thought that while their full length on Crank! was pretty good, it didn't live up to their live performance. The first thing I noticed about this record was the fact that both sides of the record run at different speeds. That's kind of annoying but I guess I can deal with it, and the music on this record more than makes up for it. The three songs on this 7" are all super catchy and capture the live sound of this band much better than their previous release. However the real gem of this seven inch is the song "Winter-Sworn" which must have been listened to 30-40 times in the last few weeks. If you haven't been impressed with this band in the past, I would recommend giving them a second chance and throwing this on your turntable. I bet you'll change your mind, and if you've liked them all along (like me) you won't be disappointed. JB

Sunshine "Velvet Suicide" (Day After) CD- Since when is Iggy Pop cool again? Maybe it was his song on the *Trainspotting* soundtrack, or perhaps it was the VH-1 *Behind the Music* special on his... er... relationship with David Bowie. Nonetheless, that whole glam punk thing is cool again. You know, ubiquitous androgyny, keyboards and distorted guitars, and the kind of vocals that reminds me of Robert Smith with his head chopped off. I only hope these neo-glam bands don't do as much smack as that glam-metal thing from the '70s. So here we have the next big thing from the Czech Republic, and they actually give former-Soviet-bloc punk rock a good name. I think a good comparison for this stuff would be the Knack meets the Stooges, if you see that one. This music can go from spastic rock and roll to brooding jams in no time at all and still keep me thinking about what your typical Locust fan looks like. Very impressive. RS

The Tantrums "Motels" (Cheetah's) CD- This is pleasant country punk flavored with rock and fronted by a female vocalist who more than fits the bill. Ross mentioned a similarity to the singer of Tilt, which I can see, but it's often more grandiose-sounding, in an almost show-tune-ish way. But then again, this brings up the awful dual vocalists of the Dancehall Crashers and the somehow more irritating singer of Save Ferris. Some of the tracks have a real Orange County flavor to it, but there's a good sense of classic country dramatics on the title track. Spotty effort, as they don't seem to know if they're going to get serious and play real country with a punk overtone or if they want to remain in the well-worn canon of poppy punk. Development here, please. dup

Ten In The Swear Jar "My Very Private

Track Attack

The LOI Review Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS
du prospicio: dup

Dan Frantic: DF
Jonah Bayer: JB

Jason Murphy: JM
Adam Parks: AP

Map (Acrobat) CD- There seems to be a small (but growing) number of people who are mixing lo-fi bedroom pop with some cheap electronic beats and samples. It's really just extension of the whole lo-fi thing; it's just instead of the lead singer's brother playing drums, there's a drum machine. Ten In The Swear Jar throw all that (as well as banjos, accordions, synths, and whatever else is lying around the room) into the mix and what comes out sounds unlike 99% of what is out there now. Another thing I like is this less cutesy than most of the other music in this genre; sometimes I like my music a little serious or reserved. I totally enjoy the intimacy of this album; I almost feel like I'm in the room, working the four-track recorder. Buy this instead of the next Skarhead album, please. JM

Tension "War Cry" (Grilled Cheese/Cargo) CD- Nice, early 80's style pre-crust punk heaviness. And it makes sense, as apparently there are ex-members of Fifth and The Exploited in the band. Hard and still melodic, THIS is what punk rock meant once. As a Canadian band, they warrant comparisons to DOA, Stretch Marks as well as Discharge, Broken Bones. Excellent, blazing and angry stuff here. dup

Those Unknown "Malice And Misfortune" (TKO) CD- Hells yeah! The all-too well named Those Unknown return from out of nowhere. This act has managed to fly under the radar for years, even among fans of Oi and streetpunk. TKO even admits that this is their first release "after 5 years of silence." No wonder I can't find any online info about them; most kids weren't listening to punk when they started to release records! The NJ-based outfit has released music on Headache, Pogostick and GMM before this release, and with any luck TKO will get an album out of them soon. Those Unknown hark back to the period of time when all the UK Oi acts were maturing and their songwriting skills improving overall. They are as much a true streetpunk act as they are really hard folk musicians. I have yet to see anyone tell stories as well as Bill Owen (leader/guitar/vox), and blend in strong rock and folk influences while still sounding hard as hell. This EP contains 3 originals and a cover of the standard "Dirty Old Town" that many know as a Pogues track. These are songs of the downtrodden, dirty fingernail factory worker who is down on his luck yet still proud of what he is. Tremendously catchy anthemic punk rock with the honesty of a bunch of guys who have been around long enough to sing it with real heart. They get me every time- truly exceptional. dup

Three Ways Till Tuesday (Common Ground) CD- Yes sir, I will have another cup of emo, this time with another spoonful of crunch in it. So this isn't much different than your normal emo band, but how can you refuse when it sounds so good? We're talking loud distorted guitars, pleading choruses, and some nice slow and quiet parts to accentuate the loud parts. And yes, the songs are about grrls and relationships. C'mon, grab that cardigan and run to the local record store or distro to pick this one up; you'll be yelling along in no time flat. JM

Tomorrow "Build a Brand New Sky" (Sche-

matics) CD- There is such a thing as too much moderation. Take this CD, for example. The band does dip into both the heavy and quiet end of the emo pool, but never enough to be believable. When a singer is yelling or screaming for my attention, I have to be convinced, and this just isn't cutting it. For the most part, the songs simply run the middle ground, which makes the band seem insincere and dooms them to mediocrity. I've said it before and I will say it again: if there is someone doing it better, why waste your time in the minor leagues when you can be seeing the real thing? Don't count this band out, but I also wouldn't lose sleep over them. JM

Torn Apart "Ten Songs for the Bleeding Hearts" (Ferret) CD- Hell yeah, this CD made my day. I was under the impression that this band had broken up (sniff), but then I get this and all is well. Then I throw it on and all is better. This is what hardcore should be: heavy as sin, great time changes to keep things interesting (but not too many, this isn't Rush), and a singer whose voices goes from high pitched to a cool metal growl in two seconds flat. On the same token, there's no wanky guitar solos or insincere calls for unity or any of the other horrible contemporary hardcore traditions. And to top it all off, they cover of Guns and Roses' "It's So Easy" is flat out awesome. No joke, this stuff had me bouncing off the walls, prompting the down-stairs neighbors to come up and tell me to "quiet down!" If that's not a point for Torn Apart, I don't know what is. JM

Tugboat Annie "The Space Around You" (Big Top) CD- I've been into this Boston-by-way-of-Buffalo quartet for years ever since I heard their fabulous lo-fi hit "Stay Inside" on some Shredder comp. many years back. Well, Tugboat Annie have come a long way since then. They've built up a more complex sound, increased the range- and skill- of drumming, and become much more polished and manicured. I always thought this band was amazing at playing really simple songs that conveyed a sort of dreamy melancholy impeccably. However, I was never really into the old sound. All the songs seemed to blend together (with obvious exceptions, like "Satellite" off the album "Super Friends") and got old really quick. Here we have their newest record after a home-base relocation which should garner them some acclaim above the level we critics reside on, much less some A&R interest as well. I couldn't quite put my finger on it, but I knew there was something in this record I had heard before. I've come to the conclusion that that something was a healthy dose of Jimmy Eat World's first album. Much slower and darker, but the similarities remain nonetheless. This is really good stuff that should appeal to the indie rocker looking for a bit less grit and a bit more shine. RS

Tupamaros "Our Modern Past" (Scene Police/Music Is My Heroin) CD- Mmmmm, German emo/hardcore with strained vocals. Not bad, they seem to make a lot out of middle-speed emo with hardcore tendencies. They go back and forth between hardcore leads and emo guitar plink somewhat strangely. The singer does inhale the microphone in a few places, which is somewhat alarming for the mathy arrangements here. I normally like European vocals sung in English, but the vocals merely get an 'E' for effort. Maybe on their next album. dup

Turing Machine "A New Machine for Living" (Jade Tree) CD- No doubt about it, Turing Machine is a noise band. They don't squeal spasmodically like Melt Banana or drown their songs in an ocean of feedback; for Turing Machine, every burst of guitar reverb or wall of wailing static serves a musical point. Therefore, their all-instrumental sound comes across as being precise and calculated, even though it is imbued with so much tension and energy that it seems like any moment it is going to veer off wildly into space. "The Doodler," clocking in just short of an impressive nine minutes, is a good example of the band's ethos of controlled chaos: minimalist, sinister guitars vibrate in the background for a full minute before a thunderous cascade of drums appears from out of nowhere, nearly splitting the song in half. It is not until three minutes into the song that any steady beat begins to emerge. All in all I find this to be much more intelligent and textured than most so-called "noise" releases. Fans of Rodan or Slint should certainly check it out. DF

Twelve Hour Turn "The Victory of Flight" (No Idea) CD- I was really psyched to review this because I have really liked everything No Idea has put out recently. The abstract album artwork really caught my eye and I was expecting something in the vein of Small Brown Bike or Hot Water Music. However what I got was fairly bland metal hardcore. Not to say this is horrible the music has parts that really stand out. Every once in a while they will play a melodic part which contrasts the heavier parts beautifully. Unfortunately, the constant half screamed vocals get really monotonous after a while and really ruin anything that the music accomplishes. I think that if the singer had more range or added some parts where he sang it could break up the songs a little bit. It seemed to me like all of these songs ran together and sounded the same. The best part about this release (besides the art work) were the lyrics which were political but not in a preachy way but took more of an introspective approach. I really wanted to like this but the music just doesn't do it for me. JB

Twenty Third Chapter "An Eden for the Machines" (OHEV) CD- I do enjoy this band's politics; they're against colonialism, imperialism, religion, and capitalism. But I'm not listening to a lecture, I was hoping for message and some decent music. Well, this is not decent music. This is angry metal hardcore that is completely a dime a dozen right now. I'm just curious, is it a prerequisite that if you are angry, your music has to be fast, loud, and full of growling? Anger can manifest itself in other ways, I'm sure. And to add insult to injury, the layout for this CD is bad, with weird cartoons, bad stolen images, and gratuitous swear words and satanic symbols. So yeah, I'd stand by these guys at a protest, just don't ask me to go to a show, because I will definitely be washing my hair or something. JM

Unbroken "It's Getting Tougher to Say the Right Things" (Indecision) CD- There are some bands who were damn good when they were together, but for some reason the punk/hardcore community could give a shit about their existence while they were together. Then once they break up and a million and a half bands copy their sound they become posthumously huge... or at least very important. I

often call this Pixies-syndrome, but one might just as easily dub it Rorschach-syndrome (although I never Rorschach were that good to begin with). Unbroken is clearly one of the bands that deserved that status. Honestly, I'm not quite sure how appreciated this San Diego hardcore combo was when together, as I never really liked this stuff at age 16, but judging by the pictures in the insert I'd say they did pretty well for themselves. Clearly their combination of youth-crew unity anthems and more modern hardcore crunch has influenced countless bands since then, even if their recordings were only mediocre. As Dan said, "discographies are a privilege not a right," and judging by the power of these songs, I'd say the making of this CD is quite justified. RS

Valve "Parallel You" (MoodFood) CD- I'm a huge Britpop fan, and I say this without the slightest trace of shame or embarrassment. But there's a lot of Britpop that I find to be absolutely atrocious and reprehensible. To grossly simplify things, most Britpop (and American pseudo-Britpop such as Valve) falls into one of two categories: either it has balls, pizzazz, some sort of snarl or twist to it that elevates it above standard modern-rock tunes. I'd put Pulp or Blur in this category. The other category is the Britpop that doesn't seem to be aware of its own silliness, the stuff that is so sincerely and heartwrenchingly sappy and/or derivative that it's painful to listen to. This is where'd I'd put bands like Oasis or the Charlatans. Valve, who do Britpop by way of America, fit in nicely among the bands in this second category, as their sound is so custom-tailored for play on modern-rock radio that it's frightening. This is the type of stuff that tries to be lush and layered and insightful but instead comes off sounding like Third Eye Blind. DF

V/A "Go-Kart Vs. The Corporate Giant 2" (Go-Kart) CD- Go-kart seems to have a very impressive roster right now as detailed by the CD. Remaining the only good straight-up punk rock label on the east coast, their line-up is pretty much a who's who of post-Lookout/Epitaph punk. My only problem is that most of these bands seem have seen their heyday with the apex of punk rock a few years ago when Green Day dominated the airwaves. Bands like Down By Law, The Buzzcocks, The Parasites, Boris the Sprinkler, etc. are all great bands, still capable of putting out great music apparently, but I have to wonder about their relevance in Y2K. Bands like VOD, The Lunachicks, and Anti-flag are all good bands as well, but I think all their best work was a few years ago when less hype and expectations made their music sound a bit more original. Hmm, something to think about. But, while you consider that, I will be rocking out to some great songs courtesy of Go-Kart. RS

V/A "Playing 4 Square" (Drive-Thru/ My Records/ Negative Progression/ Suburban Home) CD- I never quite know how to review label samplers. Do I basically say which bands are good and bad, or express my personal views on the label and how they fit into the punk rock scene? This CD is the hardest sampler to review yet, as it's 28 songs of 4 different labels. Honestly I'm not into all that much that's on here. It's 4 labels that put out respectable punk rock but basically stick to the formula that labels like Fat Wreck and Lookout! created in the early '90s. I generally like the stuff Suburban Home puts out, but unfortunately my favorite songs on their last few releases failed to show up on this CD. I had only heard one Negative Progression release before this, but even Bracket's great cover of

"My Boyfriend's Back" doesn't really make me any more excited. My Records seems like a pretty good label, and have some well known bands displayed here like Lagwagon, Nerf Herder, and the Ataris. But, do we really need another another punk label in Northern California? Oh yeah, Drive-Thru, can't forget them. I guess it's pretty cool for a label that gets their funding from major record companies to be seen in the company of 3 credible indie labels— who actually have far more interesting songs than Drive-Thru presented on this CD—but it reminds me of those girls in grade-school who only hang out with the girls who can make them look better or do something for their own benefit. So there you have it. Pretty good stuff, just nothing new. RS

V/A "Pop2k: The Album" (Airplay) CD- The only time label compilations are tolerable is when they have unreleased tracks on them or you have never heard of either the label or anything on the CD. This disc fits into the latter category. I guess this is the launching point for a pop-only label, so this is a taste of what is in store, a sampler to wet your appetite. As it is an all pop label, the CD tends to flow together, pulling it even farther away from the stigma that is the compilation. Will I buy anything due to exposure from this CD? Yeah, maybe (The Gears, Myracle Brah, The Pills, and Ultimate Fakebook spring to mind). Any regrets? Yeah. Is it me, or do some indie rock bands manage to sound like dead ringers for current million album sellers with less production and less blemish attached to their name? Maybe it's just me. JM

V/A "Skyscraper Magazine Presents Technology: A Compilation of Remixes" (Skyscraper) CD- With remixes losing their status as the sole domain of purely electronic acts, many quirker "rock" acts have been trying their hand at jumbling around their songs to create something interesting and new. Skyscraper magazine's first (to my knowledge) musical release is a compilation of bands ranging from Lowercase to Les Savy Fav remixing or getting others to remix their own songs. While the concept is laudable, the execution is decidedly spotty. Most of the good remixes, such as Tristeza's "A Little Distance," either adopt the mellow drum & bass sound of LTJ Bukem (or perhaps Squarepusher on valium), or don't tamper terribly with the original song, as is the case with Bent Leg Fatima or Novasonic Down Hyperspace. But other songs are squawky and unlistenable - in particular, the remixes of the Make-Up and the Murder City Devils fail to milk anything even remotely interesting from the original songs. I applaud the bands here for attempting something which remains taboo in the mind of many hard-line punk rockers, but after listening to this record, I'm left to believe that perhaps some bands really are better off without remixes. DF

V/A "This Changes Everything" (Second Nature) CD- What else can be said about Second Nature? It seems every band signed on this label is really creative and innovative. It also doesn't hurt that they consistently have the best layouts in all of hardcore. This comp is a mix of material some old and some new from the Second Nature roster. Standouts include The Casket Lottery, Waxwing, and Krakatoa. I

was especially pleased to see that they included "Conceptualizing Theories in Motion" by Grade from their Second Nature release "Separate the Magnets," which is quite possibly one of my favorite records of the last few years. You've got the big names like Coalesce and Reggie and Full Effect, but there are also many more obscure SN bands like Sharks Keep Moving and Kid Kilowatt who should not be overlooked. Please do yourself a favor and spend your 5 bucks on this CD instead of Punk-O-Rama 19, or any of the other budget punk compilations with the same 15 punk bands you've heard a million times before. JB

V/A "Welcome to Triple Crown Records" (Triple Crown) CD- OK, here's the deal with this review. Ross felt my first review was a little too harsh, so here we go again. I'll try to be nice. For those of you not familiar with Triple Crown, it is the label responsible for putting out NYHC bands such as 25 to Life, Comin' Correct, and Mushmouth. Now either you like this kind of stuff or you don't, and I fall into the latter category. To be honest most of these bands sound like Victory rejects and their typical sound ranges from the straight up NYHC of Agnostic Front to the metal influenced moshcore of Hatebreed. There is even a band on here called Voice of Reason who is a dead ringer for Reach the Sky. But seriously this comp isn't all bad. The Hot Rod Circuit tune on here is pretty catchy (even though it sounds exactly like the Juliana Theory) and how bad could any comp be that contains Jejune covering the Scorpions? If you wear your basket-ball jersey long after practice is over because you think it looks cool then you'll probably like this comp. Hey I prefer to change my shirt and maybe shower before I go out, so I think I'll pass. JB

The Vico Road CD- Hmm, what happens when a jaded punk rocker realizes that the music he listens to just ain't cool anymore? He goes indie? Maybe. It seems that all the ex-punk kids I know are now heavily into that melodramatic trash some call emo. Fortunately for an ex-punk rocker like myself, not all emo bands are bad. There are those that combine the unmistakable whining voice made famous by Mineral or Christie Front Drive with a good sense of melody and power. The Vico Road seems to fall square into the spot I'm speaking of. Musically they sound like Braid's very early stuff (with similar poor production as well) mixed with the drumming of the Dilinger Escape Plan. Actually I'm quite impressed. Although the singer, Johnny, has one of those whiny, longing voices it is not as grating as I expected. Similarly the abundance of dissonance and speed makes this a very interesting listen. RS

Waifile "And the Blood Will Come Down Like a Curtain" (Magic Bullet) CD- OK, I know that the music is more important than the packaging, but I need to rave about this layout because it is so incredible. It comes in a box with full cover artwork and Chinese characters and quotes all over it. Open the box and there is an oversized full color booklet full of more quotes and amazing photography. The CD is contained in a mini jewel case with all of the album info, etc. So you want to know about the music? Well the music is pretty damn good too. Waifile does metal hardcore but keeps it really melodic so it doesn't sound like every other metal band you've already heard on Victory or whatever. The music ranges from really mellow intros, to

Dilinger Escape Plan-esque craziness, but they keep it at a sort of Black Sabbath muddy groove most of the time. The screamed vocals work really well with the grooving metal and they complement each other very well. I couldn't help bobbing my head while I was listening to this. In the liner notes it says "we poured everything we had into this recordings— won't you please let us know what you think?" Here's what I think, if everyone put this amount time, money, patience and creativity into their releases as Waifile did into this you wouldn't need record reviews. In other words...buy this. JB

Walls of Jericho "The Bound Feed the Gagged" (Trustkill) CD- Warm and cozy album title doncha think? Anyways, here we have what I think is the first full length from this MI hardcore band. Walls of Jericho is perhaps best known for having a female singer (and maybe also for gracing the cover of our seventh issue), something that doesn't seem to happen much in hardcore. I honestly don't think I've ever heard a female singer for a hardcore band unless you count melodic bands like Beta Minus Mechanic or Ashes, who really didn't fit into the Victory/ Trustkill/Rev thing at all like this band. While the music may be fairly generic in sort of a Stripe or Morning Again type way, Candice, the female in question, totally rocks. She sounds unmistakeably like a woman, but doesn't sound whiny or wimpy at all. I have to admit, I don't see much that sets this band apart from the usual Victory/ Trustkill stuff, but they do the metalcore thing in a really tight, really fast, if sometimes cheesy way. RS

The Warren Commission "rendezvous with you" (Espo) CD- OK, this CD gets my award of best layout, hands down. It is packaged spiral notebook style for all of you college kids. It's complete with full color photos and even transparencies, someone spent a lot of money on this. Here is the question: I'm sure you'll all waiting for does the music back it up? The answer is not really. The Warren Commission reminds me a lot of Rainer Maria unfortunately they lack the emotion and originality of Rainer Maria. Instead they come across as a typical mellow indie band with female vocals. This is a lot better than most you'd hear on the radio, but it's still really overdone. I really wanted to like this because of the layout, but I just can't get into it. If you like Rainer Maria or Jejune you might dig this band but they just don't do it for me. This is almost worth buying just so you can hang the layout on the wall or something, it's that good. If these guys (and girls) could put the same originality and effort into the music as they did into the packaging they would be a force to reckon with. Unfortunately they haven't reached that level yet, but they definitely have the potential to do so. JB

The Wicked Farleys "Make It It" (Big Top) CD- On the Wicked Farleys' second album (EPs and such notwithstanding), the band adopts a noisier, almost prog-rock sound, with very questionable results. It might be the lineup changes that the band has gone through between albums, but the competent if not brilliant emo from their older days is almost gone— in its place is a keyboard-embellished mishmash of styles that is neither captivating nor particularly unlistenable. There are some strange guitar sounds here, but that doesn't necessarily mean they're pleasing to the ear. Plenty of bands have to hunt for a while before they find a sound that suits them, and I don't fault the Wicked Farleys for "grow-

ing" musically, but as this album demonstrates, their search isn't over yet. DF

Wilbur Cobb "The Night of Wilbur Cobb" (Nova) 7"- 11 songs on a seven inch? This could only mean one thing: good old fashioned grindcore. But there was something different about this band than most grindcore I've heard, I actually like this. Maybe it's the fact that you can kind of understand what the singer is saying or maybe it's the rock n roll breakdowns, but this is really good. The crappy recording quality obscures some of the music at points but hey, I can deal with it. The blast beats here don't even get that monotonous due to the fact that this band mixes things up and changes tempos frequently. They don't just have straight blast beats for the entire album, which is definitely a good thing. These Germans know how to rock and this vinyl is even half white, half pink. If you've never really dug grindcore but would like to try something new Wilbur Cobb just might do the trick. I'm sure that the last sentence probably applies to no one. Why don't you try to think of something witty to write at the end of reviews? Yeah that's what I thought...blat. JB

The World/Inferno Friendship Society "East Coast Super Sound Punk of Today!" (Gern Blandsten) CD- It's crystal clear to me that the awkwardly named World/Inferno Friendship Society (that's all one band) doesn't give a shit what anyone thinks of them. It's obvious from their blatant (and delightful) disregard for those silly little things called "musical genres," from their prideful and unapologetic hatred of California, and from the fact that they have the gall to mention on their press sheet that members of the band used to be in Blues Traveler. Yes, Blues Traveler. Plus Eve's Plum, Dexy's Midnight Runners, the Van Pelt, Serpico... the list goes on and on. And considering what a musical hodgepodge the W.I.F.S. compose, I don't doubt their sincerity for a moment. This is a collection of the band's four vinyl-only EPs, and if you don't have the original then this is pretty much a crucial release. W.I.F.S. deftly hop from punk to ska to soulful gospel to operatic tomfoolery, often in the space of the same song. And while the countless members of the band (seriously, I've lost count) are unabashedly silly throughout the album, their music also hides a sly literary wit. All in all this is an excellent breath of fresh air and a fine album for punks and non-punks alike. DF

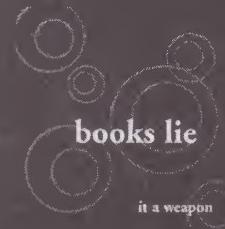
The World Is My Fuse "Good Intentions" (Espo) CD- Oh God, what the hell is this? I really want to like the records that Espo puts out, and they try so damn hard, but I don't think I've liked a single record they've released yet. Don't get me wrong, it's not their fault, as the recordings are usually good and the bands usually go on to modest success on labels like Revelation and Victory (or at least two did). But, I hear great things about the Close Call 7". Well, the packaging is always good at least. Anyhow, here we have Boston's answer to the Goo Goo Dolls or that terrible band all over the airwaves about 5 years ago, Live. The recording on this record is stunning, but the songs don't catch me at all. They're a bit too loud/soft/loud for my taste and they don't seem to go anywhere. It got to the point after a few songs where I would forget about the music and then remember it was on and think of the times when I too liked music that was mopey, high-strung, and boring. RS

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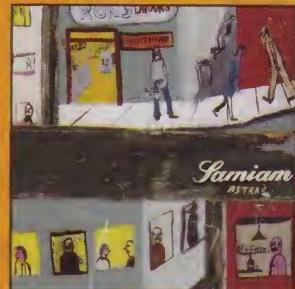
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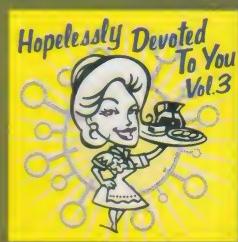
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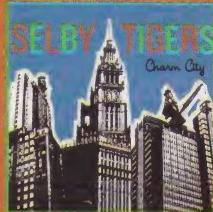


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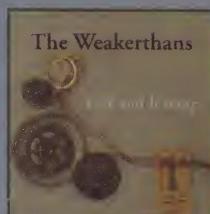
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